

Citizenships under Construction

Affects, Politics and Practices

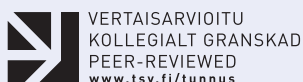
Edited by Katrien De Graeve, Riikka Rossi and Katariina Mäkinen



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Citizenships under Construction: Affects, Politics and Practices

Katrien De Graeve, Riikka Rossi and Katariina Mäkinen

While societies have never been socially and culturally homogeneous, postcolonial and post-Cold War migration have provoked a sense of ever-increasing cultural, linguistic, religious and ethnic diversification – some even say “super-diversification” (Vertovec 2007) – in spite of homogenizing tendencies due to globalization. These processes of globalization and cultural diversification seem to generate both a “closure of identities” (Geschiere and Meyer 1999), with discourses of nationalism, separatism, autochthony (Geschiere 2009; Ceuppens and Geschiere 2005) and “homogeneism” (Blommaert and Verschueren 1991), and imageries of cosmopolitanism, multiculturalism and hybridity. In this context, citizenship has emerged as a vibrant area of research for scholars across a wide range of fields, making important contributions to our understanding of shifting configurations of belonging.

This issue of COLLeGIUM presents a selection of extended papers presented at the HCAS Symposium on “Citizenship and Migration”, held in October 2014, which aimed to further the conversations on citizenship in the context of increased global migration. A focus on migration is highly relevant in today’s world of globalization, which is characterized by an intensified circulation of goods and people. The free circulation of goods, capital and ideas is, to a large extent, favoured and facilitated in a neoliberal capitalist economy; nevertheless, it is still governed by profoundly unequal power relations stemming from centuries of slavery and colonialism. Conversely, the circulation of people, or at least the migration of people coming from formerly colonized regions and impoverished and/or war-torn countries, is increasingly problematized and thought to be in need of ever-stricter immigration policies, control and the tightening of access to citizenship.

While this tightening of border control has recently been extremely visible in the United States – where a travel ban was introduced by the newly elected President Donald Trump, targeting seven countries with majority-Muslim populations – the borders of all OECD¹ countries are becoming increasingly impenetrable for those

1 OECD is the acronym for the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, which brings together 35 high-income countries describing themselves as committed to democracy and the market economy.

coming from formerly colonized and war-torn countries. To give only a couple of examples, in 2016, the Finnish Immigration Service turned down approximately half of the applications for asylum in Finland (*Yle News* 19.11.2016). While the percentage of denied asylum applications had been 25 in 2015, in 2016 it was 51.² The increase of denied asylums was due to an updated estimation of safety by the Immigration Service in May 2016, which, following a similar estimation by Sweden's immigration authorities, deemed Afghanistan, Iraq and Somalia as "safe places to return to". In addition, the Immigration Service amended the provision of the Aliens Act that allowed asylum seekers to be granted a residence permit on the basis of humanitarian protection. As we write this introduction in May 2017, there is an ongoing demonstration in Helsinki: since February, asylum seekers and allies have been spending their nights in tents to demand equitable application procedures and the freezing of all deportations until these procedures are sound and fair.³ So far, their demands have not been met by the immigration authorities or the government. In February 2017, the Belgian parliament adopted a "counter-terrorism" law which provides for the possibility of deporting "foreign" residents who are *suspected* of threatening public security, even if they were born in Belgium. These examples testify to the effects of the "global cycles of impoverishment, oppression and displacement" (Malkki 1995, 504), including the socio-political production of "illegitimate" border-crossers and non-citizens, deprived of their human rights by lack of citizenship (De Genova 2002). Processes of social abjection channel public anxiety towards those groups within the population who are imagined to be a parasitical drain and threat to scarce national resources and values, such as "bogus asylum seekers", "illegal immigrants" and "terrorist/criminal" immigrants (Tyler 2013). The Belgian example also shows the precarious citizenship of those racialized as "Others"; even though obtained through birth in the territory, it can be revoked or suspended (Stasiulis and Ross 2006).

Ideals of "active citizenship" that define "active" in terms of economic productivity and entrepreneurialism affect the very concrete possibilities for migration, and also the ways in which citizenship, shaped as it is through processes of diversification and globalization, is inevitably tied to different hierarchies based on material inequalities and divisions of class. The ideal of the economically productive, "active" migrant shapes the politics that, for instance, grant temporary residence permits for investors migrating to Europe from outside of the European Union. In Portugal, purchasing a house worth at least half a million euros gives rights to a "Golden Visa", which extends also to the investor's family members (*Helsingin Sanomat* 1.11.2016). This example stands in stark contrast to the situation of those coming from war-torn or conflict countries who struggle to get asylum in Europe and, if that is granted, must then fight to be united with their families.

2 Finnish Immigration Service statistics, <http://tilastot.migri.fi/#decisions/23330/49?l=en&start=552&end=563>, accessed 14.3.2017.

3 <https://demofi.blogspot.fi/2017/02/tiedote-turvapaikanhakijat-vaativat.html>, accessed 14.3.2017.

Alongside discourses of border securitization and philosophies of immigrant assimilation which envision a unilateral (and never completable) incorporation of minorities into mainstream society, a rhetoric of “diversity” and “interculturalism” thrives in public and scholarly debates. In light of prevailing anxieties about cultural differences, these discourses aim to emphasize the positive sides and inevitability of heterogeneity and the constant need for mutual adjustment and adaptation (Vertovec 2007; Vasta 2007). Some scholars also point to the disaggregation of citizenship (Benhabib 2002) in the current world of increasingly de-territorialized politics and the transformation of citizens into “transnationals” or “cosmopolitans” (Hannerz 1992; Werbner 1999a), with increasingly universalistic citizenship identities (Joppke 2008) within a post-territorial political community (Chandler 2007). Yet, this somehow optimistic view is not without its critics for its power-evasive tendencies and its apparent lack of conceptualization of material inequalities, conflict and struggle (Mouffe 2005; Chandler 2007). The age of super-diversity exposes a painful difference between those who enjoy and manage the benefits of globalization and those whose strategies of spatial mobility are much more precarious. While the promise of happiness in affluent societies mobilizes people in both categories, for many the fantasy of upward mobility, political and social equality reveals itself as “cruel optimism” (Berlant 2011), leading to a vicious circle of hopes and disappointments.

This issue on citizenship and migration adopts a broad definition of citizenship that goes beyond classical liberal, communitarian and republican theorizations. The contributors draw upon conceptualizations of citizenship as developed by critical citizenship studies during the last couple of decades, which have pointed out that citizenship is not just about access to formal rights, but also recognition and full participation (Lister 2007; Yuval-Davis 2007; Isin and Wood 1999). These critiques have emphasized the dialogical, relational and experiential aspects of citizenship and its inflection by a range of social and cultural factors such as identity, social status, cultural presuppositions and belonging (Lister 2007; Werbner and Yuval-Davis 1999). They not only call attention to the strong and increasing intertwinings of private decisions and practices with public institutions and state policies (Oleksy 2009, 4), but also reveal the citizenship potential of practices that are relegated to the so-called private sphere. Doing so, they extend the concept beyond a formal status in the public domain to practices and imageries of social positioning and belonging that are played out in both the public and the private realms of life (Ong 1996; Werbner 1999b; Lister 1997; Plummer 2001; Isin and Nielsen 2008; Longman, De Graeve, and Brouckaert 2013; Plummer 2003; Lister 2007; Oleksy 2009; Werbner and Yuval-Davis 1999; Turner 2008). Drawing on this valuable body of work, the contributions to this issue aim to refine, extend and complicate our understanding of citizenship and its inclusionary and exclusionary potential.

Moreover, the volume aims to further a nuanced concept of citizenship, which not only calls attention to the framework of rights and legal practices of citizenship but extends to explore the imaginary practices of participation, discourses and

symbols of belonging, ways of imagining and remaking citizenship (Modood 2007). It thus also draws upon work that emphasizes the narrative production of citizenship. Nations, as famously delineated by Benedict Anderson (1983), are imagined communities, whose members never meet most of their fellows in face-to-face reality, yet are story-projections of simultaneous belongings, created by narratives and vocabularies that shape and adjust the understanding and experience of citizenship. By tracking the power of print-capitalism in generating modern nation-states, Anderson reflects on the ways in which imagining communities is tied to existing modes of cultural representation stemming from prevailing political and economic conditions. While the novel and the newspaper were vitally important in the creation of nineteenth-century nationalism, the current globalized society is faced with an increasing exchange of stories via new media and technologies, which prompt the massive transfer of numerous historical presents across space and time. While offering community-building tools and ways of binding citizens together, the new kind of circulation of stories is not without its dystopic prospect, as new technologies have provided venues for a post-factual fabrication of realities, exploited by political populism that uses media authority and its effects of reality to legitimate disinformation and an anti-immigrant agenda.

This issue also builds on scholarly work on migration and displacement that provides a critical assessment of immigration and nationality policies (e.g. Fassin 2001; Ticktin 2011; Nyers 2006) and interrogates the taken-for-granted ways of thinking about identity and territory (Malkki 1992, 1995). This body of work has drawn attention to the analytical consequences of conceptual frameworks used in scientific analyses that reproduce common-sense ideas about the world of nations as “a discrete spatial partitioning of territory” (Malkki 1992; Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2002) and to the consequences of uncritically accepting categorizations (such as “refugees”, “asylum seekers” “economic immigrants”, “expatriates” or “natives”) broadly used in academic writing and the assumptions that underpin them (Nyers 2006; Malkki 1995). This work analyses immigration and affective as well as material landscapes of belonging and citizenship within the broader context of neoliberal politics, documenting how these politics advance the transformation of immigration control and border securitization to a productive form of industry (Tyler 2013, 75–76). In addition, it reveals how neoliberal politics promote “active” forms of citizenship (Lem 2010, 169; Tyler 2013), in which entrepreneurialism, “employability”, flexibility and adaptability are positioned as the values that define both ideal citizenship and the “model migrant” (Lem 2010, 169).

Critical migration studies have also pointed to the ways in which the models and ideals of citizenship are tied with the construction of some subjects as valuable and others as *abjects* (Tyler 2013). This construction of valuable and abject subjects draws from historical and present forms of racial and ethnic stigmatization as well as from trajectories of class, and it is also based on the emotional and affective engagements and projections stemming from these formations of inequality and oppression. The concept of abject, when detached from the psychoanalytic tradition

and rethought of as “social abjection” (Tyler 2013; 2009), provides visibility into the dynamics of the simultaneous inclusion and exclusion of the interiorized Other in the construction of citizenship. These dynamics are present, for instance, in what Nicholas De Genova (2013) has called “the Border Spectacle”, in which asylum regimes convert asylum seekers into “illegal” and deportable migrants, rendering them officially undesirable and excluded, while simultaneously producing these migrants as a legally vulnerable, precarious and tractable labour force. Studies of the material and discursive construction of valuable subjects and objects direct attention to how the different modalities of subject formation and state formation can be thought of together, not as unitary entities but as an assemblage of practices (Tyler 2013, 46). Looking at these practices as part of both subject and state formation destabilizes not only the national insider/outsider distinctions, but also the boundaries that “racial neoliberalism” produces between the rational, self-managing and productive citizen-subject and the wilful, dependent, not-valuable and resource-heavy subject (Lentin & Titley 2011, 178).

The collection presents four articles written by scholars from a variety of disciplinary fields, notably media studies, sociology, and literary studies. It brings into a productive dialogue (1) detailed empirical accounts of citizenship practices, demonstrating how in the current-day context of neoliberalism and globalization citizenship unfolds in particular contexts and settings, with (2) more theoretical reflections that examine how the concept of citizenship as a status and as a practice, both practical and political, can be further refined and developed. The approach followed in this special issue, which crosses disciplines and research methods, provides unique insight into and a useful contribution to the ongoing theorization of the complicated workings of power and affects in constructions of race, gender and class, in the shaping of narratives of history and nation, and in the creation of hierarchies of belonging and deservedness.

The contributions by Anne-Marie Fortier and Bridget Byrne focus on processes of becoming a citizen to examine the ways in which citizenship and the nation-state are understood. What is naturalized in citizenization? This question is central to **Anne-Marie Fortier’s** article, which, drawing upon her fieldwork on the attribution process of British citizenship, sets out a theoretical base for rethinking citizenization and naturalization. Working with Nordberg and Wrede’s (2015) definition of citizenization (i.e. “the ways in which ‘citizens to be’ are enacting and negotiating their paths of citizenship through myriad street-level encounters”), Fortier proposes to go beyond a linear understanding of citizenship attribution. In such an understanding, naturalization (the conferment of citizenship) is cast as a discrete legal event and the “natural” outcome of citizenization. Fortier argues for the need to supplement the institutional approach with an understanding of the “ontological politics” of citizenization. This understanding, she argues, can be obtained by adopting a *social life approach* that focuses on how the effects and outcomes of citizenization policy are variously enacted by different actors (both immigrants and institutional actors involved in citizenization processes) and in

different settings. Fortier's theoretical move consists of her call for deconstructing the baseline assumptions of much scholarly work on citizenship and migration that tends to accept the distinction between chosen and ascribed citizenship. She seeks an exploration of how citizenization and naturalization are variously entangled, connected and disconnected, through investigating "the experiences, realities, subjects, and objects (such as citizenship itself)" that citizenization measures enact. Examining policy as embodied, "as performative, relational and as producing multiple effects", Fortier argues, yields a fuller understanding of the ways in which assumptions about citizenship come into being, as well as the material, discursive and affective economies that are involved in processes of citizenization and naturalization.

Citizenship ceremonies constitute an interesting site for investigating the "intertwined social life" of citizenization and naturalization, as they are the example par excellence of an imagery that confines naturalization to a single moment at the end of the citizenization process. In her contribution, **Bridget Byrne** analyses citizenship ceremonies in the U.S. as public rituals of naturalization that reveal prevalent understandings of citizenship. Through a detailed description of events, Byrne demonstrates how an account of a nation open to immigration and new citizens – a narrative of a nation built on immigrants – is being told. She shows how this narrative of inclusion and democracy is constructed through the silencing of certain experiences and histories (such as the histories of Native Americans, the history of forced immigration of slaves and the restricted immigration of particular ethnic and racialized groups). By analysing citizenship ceremonies in the contemporary context of increased securitization and a retreat from multiculturalism, Byrne also points to the tensions that are inherent in the act of "naturalization" and in the processes of differentiating between citizens and non-citizens (or even anti-citizens) that underlie it. Byrne's analysis makes clear that even in the ceremony that celebrates the end of the citizenization process, the possibility of becoming a "full" citizen is called into question and doubts are expressed about whether one will ever be conceived of as a proper American.

The patterns of attachment and exclusion created and reinforced in nationality ceremonies clearly point to the emotional dimensions of citizenship and citizenship-building discourses. As an imagined community, nation is not only an abstraction and an invention, a set of vocabularies and discursive practices, but something deeply felt and felt to be real (Smith 1998). In this view, imagined communities define themselves as "emotional communities",⁴ which are charged with a variety of affective investments, hopes and fears of belonging, expectations of reciprocal attachment and threats of being excluded. The acknowledgement of citizenship and community membership is also an affective judgement regulated by a cluster of emotions and beliefs, desires of proximity and avoidance. The concept of 'affective citizenship' (Johnson 2010, Mookherjee 2005) has been used to illustrate

4 On the concept of "emotional community", see Rosenwein 2007.

how emotions impact on the construction of citizenship, and how ideas and ideals of emotions influence the ways in which individuals are encouraged to feel about others and themselves in public domains. The emotions being evoked are not something private and solitary; through their objects and common vocabularies and verbalizations, they constitute profoundly shared and collective means of making citizenship politics (Ahmed 2014). They are patterned and constituted by rituals of everyday social interaction (Wetherell 2012), though frequently modified by indirect and unseen ways of expression. Research on populist rhetoric illustrates the complexity of the community-shaping affective vocabularies by analysing, for instance, the ways in which nationalist metaphors of family love are used as tools of avoidance and exclusion. Mulinari (2014) coined the concept of “caring racism” to apprehend the ways in which anti-immigrant politics are being disguised as technologies of love and care (Ahmed 2004; Mulinari 2014) as a mainstream tactics in political populism. This “caring racism” also reverberates in Trumpist slogans of a “great America” “loved” by its president and in the use of the term by “immigration critics” among Finnish anti-immigration activists, who sugar-coat extreme nationalist and racist tendencies and the dissemination and production of hate speech with a veneer of analytical and rational criticism. Important is not only what is being directly said, but also the emotional tone of the discourse. In general, the affective atmosphere of political communities matters since it frames our orientation to others and thus constitutes premises for the exercise of citizenship besides juridical and economic standards. A politics of inclusion and exclusion is shaped by public mood, which can foster a sense of equality (e.g. not having to be ashamed or apologize for one’s origins, family or community), or by stirring up public disgust and contempt (Modood 1997).

The power of emotions as social glue or, conversely, as an exclusionary force in processes of citizenization, are also central in the contributions by Anu Koivunen and Olli Löytty. Through studying works of literature and film, as well as representations of citizenship in written and visual media, both contributions specifically focus on present-day reflections and productions of “Finnishness”. In her paper, **Anu Koivunen** investigates the complexity and variety of affects and emotions in processes of citizenization, examining the narratives of Finnish immigrants in Sweden. Koivunen highlights an affective practice, a pattern in process: an economy of pride and shame mobilized for purposes of identity construction and community building in the contemporary revisiting and reimagining of the histories and memories of Finnish immigrants in Sweden. A new generation of children and grandchildren of the Great Migration in the 1960s and 1970s have, since the turn of the century, entered the public arena in Sweden, articulating new narratives in pop music, literature, theatre and film. By drawing from theoretical work on affect and the production of class by Sara Ahmed (2004), Margaret Wetherell (2012; 2015) and Beverley Skeggs (2004), Koivunen investigates three genres – two novels (*Svinalängorna* by Susanna Alakoski, 2006; *Ingenbarnsland* by Eija Hetekivi Olsson, 2012), two television programmes (*Emigranterna* SVT 2006–

2007; *Kansankodin kuokkavieraat* YLE Teema 2011) and the musical documentary *Ingen riktig finne/Laulu koti-ikävästä* (Mika Ronkainen 2013). She argues that while “third-generation” Sweden Finnish artists embody success stories of migration and enjoy the appreciation and positive publicity of Swedish mainstream audiences, the new narratives are nevertheless essentially stories about living with, managing and rejecting shame. To be a cultural producer of or audience for new narratives about Sweden Finns, Koivunen proposes, is to engage with an affective legacy of shame, a sense of history and a repertoire of representations. Paradoxically, then, narratives of shame enable the revaluation of Sweden Finnishness as symbolic capital and thus propel the politics of pride. It is this dynamic of pride and shame that Koivunen dissects as a significant part of identity construction and cultural citizenship for Sweden Finns – and politics of pride as its given rejoinder.

The traditional imagery of nation-building, as expressed in patriotic poetry and other cultural products of nationalism, frequently circulates positive emotions, including love for a nation, to create attachments between citizens (Anderson 1991). Laden with imperatives of progress and growth, these vocabularies may create “emotional regimes” (Reddy 2001) of national happiness which propel monologic citizenship politics and imply a requirement to be in consensus and sympathetic agreement with others (Ahmed 2014). Yet, citizenship storytelling in contemporary literature and film tends to create counter-narratives that challenge and complement the neoliberal regimes of optimism and happiness by unveiling the painful and melancholic side of the migrant condition (see e.g. Ahmed 2010) and pointing towards the emotional liberty of imagined communities under construction. A nuanced economy of narrative community building does not avoid taking readers out of their comfort zones by depicting and soliciting negatively valorized emotions, which, as shown by Koivunen’s analysis on shame, can nevertheless serve communal functions by offering transgressive experiences of identity formation (see also Sedgwick 2003).

The difficulties of processing the trauma of war and exile also comprise a central theme in the fictional work of the Iraqi-born author Hassam Blasim, whose authorship and reception is further discussed in **Olli Löytty**’s article. Löytty illustrates how social and cultural diversity and the multilingualism in contemporary Finland has provoked a redrawing of the boundaries between Finnishness and strangeness. By focusing on the media reception of Blasim, who writes in Arabic but lives in Finland, and who after a complicated procedure has acquired Finnish citizenship, Löytty looks at the ways in which literature is used in symbolic nation-building. The story of “two seemingly mismatching things, an Arab author in the Finnish literary landscape”, allows Löytty to explore Simmel’s concept of a *stranger*. While the media welcomed the internationally awarded author to Finnish literature, the officials initially rejected his citizenship application because he failed the required Finnish-language test. His story exemplifies the mechanisms of simultaneous inclusion and exclusion that alternately position Blasim inside and outside the narrative of Finnishness. As such, he is a stranger in the Simmelian sense, a product of the constant negotiation between the familiar and the alien.

Moreover, Löytty uses the case of Blasim to pose questions about the formation of the literary canon and literature's institutional functioning in Finland. He reflects on the way in which the symbolic nation-building still echoes and processes the nineteenth-century concepts of national literature, defining which literature produced in Finland constitutes "real" Finnish literature and which is dismissed as "immigrant literature". Löytty's article is a powerful plea for rethinking Finnish literature in a Europe in transition, as well as a call to consider it as a flexible category.

Taken together, the articles in this special issue extend empirical knowledge of the ways in which citizenship is negotiated and reconfigured in everyday practice and through different cultural and literary resources and distinctions. Moreover, through the description of particular experiences and practices, in geographically different regions (the U.K., the U.S., Sweden and Finland) with different aspects of social, political and cultural life (citizenship attribution processes, citizenship ceremonies, fictional narratives and the reception of "immigrant" literature), they not only make important empirical contributions, but also key theoretical additions to the growing body of literature on citizenship and migration. Through thorough analysis and theorization of the affects, politics and practices that (re)construct citizenship and political identity in everyday life, the articles both explore and contribute to the ongoing construction of citizenship. The guest editors thank the contributors to this issue for their willingness to engage in this intellectual endeavour.

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The Social Life of Citizenisation and Naturalisation: Outlining an Analytical Framework¹

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This article interrupts the linear narrative that posits the conferment of citizenship (legal naturalisation) as the ‘natural’ outcome of citizenisation. Where the scholarship on citizenship and migration privileges the institutional life of citizenisation – where naturalisation appears as a discrete event at the end of the ‘citizenisation’ continuum – the social life of citizenisation includes naturalisation as an ontological process but is not reducible to it. ‘Ontological process’ refers to the ways in which different categories or locales of existence (the self, society, culture, the state, the nation, histories, geographies) are combined to produce understandings of what citizenship ‘really is’. Drawing on critical policy studies, ‘the social life’ of citizenisation and naturalisation rejects a conception of policy as a coercive instrument of the state or as a fixed document. I then turn to feminist science and technology scholars Annemarie Mol’s (2002) ‘ontological politics’ and Charis Thompson’s (2005) ‘ontological choreographies’ as useful frameworks to work with for tracing ontological processes within practices of citizenisation and naturalisation. To illustrate, the article builds on the widely used opposition between ascribed (birthright) and chosen citizenship (naturalisation) to show how the distinction falls apart when we understand naturalisation as part of the normalisation of such assumptions and their effects on global inequalities. The analysis demonstrates how the proposed analytical framework puts into relief joint processes of ontologising, normalising, subjectification, and stratification. Understanding how citizenisation and naturalisation function in tandem institutionally and socially is important if we are to gain a fuller grasp of how old and new forms of inequalities are refigured in twenty-first century citizenship.

What do we assume about ‘naturalisation’ as a theoretical and practical concept as it functions in citizenship theory and in the practice of citizenship attribution today? And how do social analyses of ‘citizenisation’ – the promotion and assessment

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of skills and knowledge deemed necessary for political membership – lead us to contest, complicate and refine naturalisation and its relationships to citizenisation?

Legally speaking, naturalisation refers to the acquisition of citizenship and nationality by somebody who resides in a country where she or he is not a citizen or national. In his historical analysis of the body of legislation and court rulings that define US citizenship, Rogers Smith explains that the term ‘naturalisation’ originated in feudal regimes when

subjectship to the political order under whom one was born was believed to be natural – sanctioned by divine will and rationally discoverable natural law. Persons who acquired allegiance to a new ruler we therefore said to be “naturalized.” (1997, 13)

This feudal definition suggests that ‘it is natural to be subject to the ruler under whom one is born and that it is so natural that one is subject to that ruler for life’ (Smith in Kostakopoulou 2006, 95n108). Smith goes on to say that ‘[t]he puzzling survival of the term “naturalization” is, however, only one tip of a huge iceberg of anomalies and contradictions that lurk below the surface of American citizenship law.’ (1997, 13)

Smith’s puzzlement derives from an opposition that is still found in much of the current imagination, laws, and academic scholarship about citizenship attribution in the Anglo-European worlds: the opposition between ascription (birthright citizenship) and consent (naturalisation), which Smith attributes to illiberal and liberal traditions respectively. This opposition fails to recognise the extent to which ‘subjectship’ remains an integral part of citizenship in three ways, as Eldon Eisenach argues (1999, 200): ‘subject to the laws (and their protections); subject to the political sovereign or “state” (and its protections) [...]; and subject to God.’² Like in much of the scholarship on citizenship and migration, what Eisenach intimates but does not elaborate is not only the limits of the consent-ascription dualism, but the many other ways in which ‘naturalisation’ operates if we consider it outside of its strict legal definition.

Contra the accepted understanding of legal naturalisation as a voluntary act, ‘naturalisation’ ‘denotes the opposite of choice’ (Joppke 2010, 16). For through ‘naturalisation’, something is ‘made natural’ – brought into conformity with nature – as in the case of aligning one’s permanent place of residence with one’s nationality. In this form, ‘naturalisation’ re-establishes the ‘natural’ order of things because citizenship takes as its baseline assumption that most of us reside in the country into which we are born. Furthermore, stating that something is ‘natural’ establishes a value judgement about what is socially acceptable and desirable. As Judith

2 In the US – the context that concerns Smith and Eisenach – the pledge of allegiance that is commonly recited in schools, in public meetings, congressional sessions, etc., refers to the US Republic as ‘on nation under God’. In a constitutional monarchy such as the UK, oaths of allegiance are sworn to the monarch, and are performed by members of parliament, certain public servants, and by new citizens at the citizenship ceremony. All have the option between a religious or secular version.

Williamson explains in her classic theory of ‘decoding advertisements’, ideas of what is ‘natural’ result from a transactional relationship between ‘nature’ and ‘culture’. She writes: ‘precisely because of this reference to Nature as the determinant of what is good, as though it were an independent arbiter, “the natural” becomes the meaning given *to* culture, *by* nature – although it is culture that determines “the natural” anyway’ (1978, 123; emphasis original). In contrast to Rogers Smith’s puzzlement then, an understanding of ‘naturalisation’ as a social and cultural *process* and *product* resulting from transactions between culture and nature rather than solely as a legal process, allows us to excavate how it continues to ‘make sense’ within the realm of citizenisation and citizenship attribution. This is more than a matter of semiotics. It is about how, *in practice*, citizenisation and naturalisation are variously enacted, the different realities that they bring forth, and the ‘ontological politics’ (Mol 2002) surrounding the choice of some realities over others (Law 2004, 13).

This article interrupts a linear narrative within the multidisciplinary field of citizenship and migration studies that casts naturalisation as a discrete legal event confined to the conferment of nationality. Rejecting this position as a starting point for analysis, this article argues that the concepts of naturalisation and citizenisation and their relationships to one another need to be rethought. There is a need to bridge understandings of naturalisation as legal and political processes with understandings of naturalisation as a *social ontological process*. This is both a methodological and theoretical move. Methodologically, this means moving beyond top-down or bottom-up approaches in favour of what Wright and Reinhold (2011) call a ‘studying through’ of citizenisation and naturalisation that sheds light on how policies and their effects and outcomes are not fixed but variously enacted by various actors in different settings; these actors include both immigrants seeking citizenship or ‘citizen-like’ status, *as well as* institutional actors charged with implementing citizenisation processes (more on this below). In short, the framework requires a study of the *social world* of citizenisation policy. Theoretically, extending a social understanding of naturalisation into formal citizenisation measures is to scrutinise how citizenisation is framed, enacted and experienced, and to unpack the different ‘realities’ assumed under ‘citizenship’. To be sure, the ‘unnatural’ character of citizenship is widely accepted in current scholarship on citizenship and migration. At the same time, the accepted distinction between chosen and ascribed citizenship suggests the endurance of some baseline assumptions about the ‘reality’ of how one acquires citizenship. My sociological curiosity takes me to question how this ‘reality’ is sustained as the state of ‘how things are’, what its effects are, and if it could be seen differently. Taking the artifice of citizenship as a premise, understanding naturalisation as social ontological process invites an analysis of the ways in which the artifice of citizenship is *concealed or rendered irrelevant* in citizenisation. Thinking about the social life of citizenisation and naturalisation requires an analysis of how different categories or locales of existence (the self, society, culture, the state, the nation, [imperial] histories, geographies) are called forth and ‘naturalised’ in citizenisation practices, and combine to produce

understandings of what citizenship ‘really is’. Thus the questions are: what is naturalised in citizenisation? Put differently, what *are* the assumptions of citizenship (c.f. Clarke et al. 2014)? How do these assumptions circulate as a ‘reality’? How and under what circumstances is one kind of reality enacted rather than another? What are the effects of privileging some realities over others on social relations?

It is important to address these questions because, as Engin Isin (2015) points out, understanding twenty-first century citizenship requires different concepts, methods, and data. Citizenship today is diffuse, fragmented, and unstable (e.g. Brown 2015, De Genova and Peutz 2010, Wacquant 2009). At the same time, European states are tightening access to citizenship for most foreigners. Exposing the ways in which assumptions about citizenship arise from a range of exchanges, transactions, or even compromises between what people know and what people view as ‘the reality of how things are’ is important if we are to understand how old and new forms of inequalities are (re)figured in contemporary citizenisation processes. Second, the questions move us beyond a view that opposes institutional actors to those who are the subjects affected and targeted by state policies, as if they were part of different ‘cultures’. Rather, the object is to draw out how all these actors – and I include the policy itself as an ‘actor’ (more on this below) – are ‘implicated in a set of shared and divergent forces that bring [them] together and move [them] apart’ (Povinelli 2011, 84). In sum, the social life approach is not meant to replace the institutional one, but rather to supplement it with an analysis of the ‘ontological politics’ of citizenisation. While institutional approaches largely feature an analysis of the political or state interests and national or international political trends and issues at stake surrounding the design of citizenisation measures, the social life approach proposed here features an analysis of the experiences, realities, subjects, and objects (such as citizenship itself) that these measures enact.

The framework sketched out here is still in its exploratory stages; it grows out of a multi-sited fieldwork on the British citizenship attribution process that I conducted between 2012 and 2014 in England.³ This is a study of meso-levels of governing practices that take place in different settings: namely in local authorities, in ESOL⁴ classes, and in interviews with applicants for citizenship or settlement, new citizens, as well as various institutional actors.⁵ Though inspired by a locally specific study,

3 The fieldwork involved observations of eleven citizenship ceremonies in nine local councils, six ESOL classes, and of a citizenship and nationality team at a London Borough Council. The latter involved shadowing registrars for one week as they completed a range of tasks related to citizenship attribution. During the fieldwork, I completed a total of 43 interviews with ESOL teachers, registrars, ceremony officials, applicants and new citizens.

4 English for Speakers of Other Languages.

5 In the context where citizenisation is a dispersed form of governance that contracts out to private and public organisations, I use institutional actors as a shorthand to designate all those ‘bureau’ (Lea 2008) or ‘new’ (Osborne and Gaebler 1992) professionals or ‘street-level bureaucrats’ (Lipsky 1980) from both public or private sectors who are tasked with a range of different roles in the citizenship attribution process. These include citizenship test supervisors and authorisers, ESOL teachers, local authority registrars and officials.

the proposed framework is applicable to the wider field of citizenship and migration, particularly (but not exclusively) with regards to citizenisation and naturalisation.

The article includes two sections. The first section covers what I term ‘the institutional life of citizenisation and naturalisation’, where I discuss the contributions and limitations of current conceptualisations of ‘citizenisation’ and naturalisation as institutional legal processes. While I appreciate the distinction between the two policy measures, namely in the work of Sara Wallace Goodman (2014), I also critique the limits of a conception that posits citizenisation and naturalisation as discrete events on a same continuum. I argue that we need to rethink naturalisation as a social ontological process that is part and parcel to the integration agenda that citizenisation measures are said to respond to. This takes me to the second section on ‘the social life of citizenisation and naturalisation’, where I sketch my analytical framework for examining how ‘naturalisation’ is variously enacted and variously attached to and detached from citizenisation. Drawing on critical social policy, I situate ‘the social life’ of citizenisation and naturalisation within an approach that rejects a conception of policy as a coercive instrument of the state or as a fixed document, conceiving of policy instead as performative, relational and as producing multiple effects. I then turn to science and technology researchers Annemarie Mol’s (2002) ‘ontological politics’ and Charis Thompson’s (2005) ‘ontological choreographies’, to illustrate how, in practice, one could trace ontological processes in citizenisation and naturalisation policies.

The Institutional Life of Citizenisation and Naturalisation

The institutional life of naturalisation and ‘citizenisation’ is very well documented within the scholarship on citizenship and migration, where we learn how they have historically been subject to continuous reconfigurations within laws, rules, and policies. More recent studies of ‘civic integration’ measures reveal how the policy field of integration has expanded from the legal field of naturalisation. However, if integration requirements are no longer confined to naturalisation (e.g. language tests for entry visas; Kostakopoulou 2010, Goodman 2014), I add that naturalisation is part and parcel of the integration agenda. After exposing the possibilities and limitations of current understandings of the institutional life of citizenisation and naturalisation, this section argues that naturalisation is not as discrete a phenomenon that it is made out to be. This lays the groundwork for the subsequent section that elaborates on my framework for studying the social life of citizenisation and naturalisation.

The scholarly field on citizenship and migration has been a fertile ground for important debates concerning institutional changes in citizenship in the context of a globalised and mobile world. More specifically, the large tranche of scholarship devoted to the domains of citizenship acquisition and, more recently, ‘civic integration’ (Brubaker 1989, 1992, Bauböck 1994, 2006, Bauböck et al.

2006; Bauböck & Joppke 2010, Bloemraad 2006, Calder et al. 2010, Goodman 2014, Kiwan 2013a, Koopmans et al. 2012, Vink and de Groot 2010; Weil 2002; Pickus 1998) reveals how practices of ‘citizenisation’ have extended beyond the conferment of nationality strictly speaking and into the promotion and acquisition of citizen-like skills and statuses.

In her comparative study of civic integration measures in Western Europe, Sara Wallace Goodman (2014) argues that these measures signal the development of new forms of political membership and belonging that are not reducible to citizenship-as-nationality, but which rather lead to ‘an alternative understanding of belonging’ that she labels ‘state identity’ (2014, 16). As a result, integration policies have significantly changed the ‘fundamental parameters of naturalization’ (2014, 7), such as where the lines between nationality and other legal statuses become blurred. Goodman, drawing on Marie-Claire Foblets, speaks of these measures as ‘citizenization’ (2014, 3, 51) where changes in the timing and geographical reach of integration requirements have altered the fundamentals of naturalisation insofar as ‘citizen-like’ skills and values are required for a range of subjects, ‘from persons seeking citizenship to immigrants seeking entry and permanent residence.’ (Goodman 2014, 3). For Goodman, citizenisation and naturalisation are formally different, and that difference reflects a wider shift in state policies that promote belonging and political membership rather than citizenship strictly speaking. As a result of these policy developments, the scope of citizenisation has expanded while the remit and scope of naturalisation have narrowed.⁶

The differentiation between citizenisation and naturalisation is useful because it highlights how ‘citizen-like’ statuses can be acquired outside of nationality, namely in the context of the strengthening of the rights of foreigners and the rise of minority rights (Joppke 2010, Bosniak 2006, Soysal 1994). Citizenisation also refers to a range of concrete measures designed by governments to ensure the eligibility of immigrants seeking permanent residency or citizenship status: namely language and citizenship education and tests, residency requirements, ‘good character’, and so on. From the state’s point of view, citizenisation is a solution against the ‘citizenship deficit’ of applicants. But ‘citizenisation’ also opens up the possibility for thinking of citizenship as an ongoing process, not a finite ‘status’ or something that one simply has (or not). This view is suggested by Camilla Nordberg and Sirpa Wrede’s use of ‘citizenisation’ which they define as ‘the ways in which “citizens to be” are enacting and negotiating their paths to citizenship through myriad street-level encounters’ (2015, 56). What I add to this is that institutional actors are also

⁶ It is beyond the scope of this article to further elaborate on the relationship between integration policies and citizenisation/naturalisation. There is considerable debate around whether integration measures ‘thicken’ citizenship by foregrounding a cultural content, or whether they produce a ‘citizenship light’ (Joppke 2010). Much of this discussion follows the classic distinction between civic and ethnic nationalism and extends it into citizenship. In contrast, the framework developed here seeks to challenge that distinction – citizenship (like nationalism) always contains both ‘civic’ and ‘ethnic’ elements – by examining how the distinction itself is naturalized in citizenisation measures, and what effects it has on social relations.

‘enacting and negotiating’ their way through citizenisation as they encounter applicants: they are finding their way through the policies and measures, and they also reflectively engage with what citizenship means through their encounters with noncitizens. In this sense, citizenisation interpellates citizens as well as immigrants.

This is a blind spot of the literature on citizenisation: by centring on immigrants as the sole subjects of citizenisation measures, it risks renaturalising the distinction between so-called ‘native born’ or ‘birthright citizens’ and foreigners by neglecting to consider how citizenship education and testing for immigrants must also be understood as addressing the nation at large, as Bonnie Honig (2001) argues with regards to citizenship ceremonies. In this vein, some educational researchers propose to retrieve the ‘pedagogical power’ of citizenship education by drawing out the range of possibilities that are afforded in education practices and settings (Kiwani 2013b, Roberts and Cooke 2009, Pykett 2010). Still, researchers on citizenisation overwhelmingly adopt the state’s viewpoint and accept that citizenisation of new citizens is solely about immigrants – whether these authors are concerned with the extent to which citizenisation measures comply with or violate liberal citizenship’s principles of inclusion and equality (Bauböck and Joppke 2010, Etzioni 2007, Triadafilopoulos 2011), or whether they analyse the programmatic structure of naturalisation and integration as power laden and disciplining mechanisms (Fortier 2013, Löwenheim and Gazit 2009, de Leeuw and van Wichelen 2012).

The field of naturalisation and citizenisation is largely organised along different ‘moments’ in the attribution or acquisition of citizen-like statuses, as if ‘citizenisation’ and naturalisation are discrete events: thus educational and testing measures are considered separately from citizenship ceremonies.⁷ In short, citizenisation is to integration what ‘naturalisation’ is to the conferment of nationality. As a result, citizenisation and naturalisation are placed on a temporal continuum, with the conferment of citizenship understood as the natural outcome of a successful citizenisation process.

The reduction of naturalisation and citizenisation to the letter of the law and of policy so simplifies understandings of naturalisation and citizenisation that it occludes how they may not always be on the same continuum, and confines naturalisation to a single moment at the end of the citizenisation process. Naturalisation and citizenisation *appear* to be on the same continuum because they are often mediated by institutional processes aimed at inculcating, assessing, and then celebrating applicants’ degree of integration: indeed Bridget Byrne (2014) rightly compares citizenship ceremonies to graduation ceremonies, and speaks of applicants for citizenship as ‘citizands’ (like graduands). Thus the assumption that citizenisation *qua* integration naturally leads to naturalisation *qua* citizenship as achieved, completed and secure status, remains unscathed.

7 On tests, see Byrne 2016, Etzioni 2007, Extra et al. 2009, Han et al. 2010, Hogan-Brun 2009, Joppke 2013, Löwenheim and Gazit 2003, Shohamy and McNamara 2009, Slade and Möllering 2010, Wright 2008. On citizenship ceremonies, see Aptekar 2012, Byrne 2014, Coutin 2003, Mazouz 2008, Fassin and Mazouz 2009, Damsholt 2008a-b, Ossipow and Fedler 2015.

Where the scholarship on citizenship in the policy fields of integration privileges the *institutional life* of citizenisation – where naturalisation is conceived as a discrete event at the end of the same continuum – I focus on the *social life* of citizenisation – which includes naturalisation as an *ontological process* but is not reducible to it. I explain the social life of citizenisation/naturalisation below. The point to make here is that citizenisation and naturalisation extend into each other and as such, they are more than the formal, linear procedures through which they are institutionalised and measured.

First, citizenisation is more than about the acquisition of ‘citizen-like’ skills and statuses, and occurs in sites where it is often overlooked, such as citizenship ceremonies. Still, it remains that *temporally*, naturalisation ceremonies are primarily conceived in law and in academic scholarship as sites where citizenisation stops and naturalisation begins (and ends) (*pace* Khan and Blackledge 2015 who see ceremonies as sites where language testing continues). We can learn from authors analysing citizenship ceremonies who combine an analysis of rhetoric and discourse with performative theories (Byrne 2014, Damsholt 2008a-b, Somerville 2005). In doing so, they highlight how new citizens are reminded of their relationship to the nation or the state: thus new citizens continue to be citizenised at the ceremony. In this way, citizenisation suggests that ‘becoming’ citizen is an ongoing process that ties in with normative conceptions of what the ‘becoming’ citizen should be as a member of the national community or polity that citizenship is tethered to. Moreover, the performative approach not only sheds light on how citizenship and the nation are performed in ceremonies, but also how the state and the state-citizen relationship are performed as well. Thus citizenisation is not only about immigrants and ‘new citizens’; it is also about reiterating and confirming the authority of the state to confer citizenship (or to deny it), as well as to enact the state-citizen relationship (Fortier 2013)

Second, if citizenisation (and not only citizenship) is more part of the naturalisation ritual in ceremonies than has been recognised, so too is naturalisation more present than it is made out to be in citizenisation practices, if we look at it as a social ontological process that can take many forms: bureaucratic practices of classification, differentiation, and objectification for example, or more broadly as a *transaction* between ‘nature’ – what simply ‘is’ – and culture – what is taught and learnt – that establishes what is desirable and socially acceptable. In short, what is missing from current research on citizenship and migration is a more complex theorisation of the relationship between naturalisation and citizenisation that allows for more in-depth empirical analyses.

The Social Life of Citizenisation and Naturalisation

Rather than approaching citizenisation and naturalisation only as institutional legal procedures, I conceive them as *social* events as well, that is as part of a *social world*

where *both* institutional actors and applicants meet.⁸ This is not to say that legal procedures are not part of the social world and shaped by it. Quite the contrary: interrupting the linear narrative of citizenisation-naturalisation and expanding an understanding of naturalisation as a social as well as legal process, is to recognise how citizenisation and naturalisation extend into each other and extend beyond their strict legal parameters. It also calls for an examination of the dynamic character of the formal procedures as they variously affect, are interpreted by, and circulate between different actors in different settings. This section outlines an analytical framework for studying the social life of citizenisation and naturalisation, which includes but is not reducible to its institutional life. I begin by situating my approach within anti-essentialist feminist and critical race theorists, and then within critical policy studies that invite analyses of the 'social life' of policy. I then illustrate how, in practice, we could trace the ways in which citizenisation – citizenship as learnt, as socialisation – and naturalisation – citizenship as the natural outcome of citizenisation – are variously entangled, connected or disconnected. To do so, I draw on science and technology scholars Annemarie Mol's (2002) 'ontological politics' and Charis Thompson's (2005) 'ontological choreography'. But first, the recognition of the influence of anti-essentialist critics on my thinking is called for.

When thinking of naturalisation as an ontological process, I am indebted to debates around essentialism in the 1980s and 1990s which significantly advanced theories of race, gender and sex by revealing the ubiquitous means by which identities and differences, and by extension power, get naturalised (Yanagisako and Delaney 1995). With regards to citizenship, Nancy Leys Stepan (1998) pointedly argued that the history of embodiment of human racial and gendered differences must be seen as part of the history of liberal citizenship and its limits (Stepan 1998). Similarly, several feminist, queer and critical race scholars have shown that to be(come) a citizen is also to be(come) a gendered, racialised and sexualised subject (Alexander 1994, Bell and Binnie 2000, Berlant 1997, Glenn 2002, MacKinnon 1989, Sheller 2012, Pateman 1988, Yuval-Davis and Werbner 1999;).

The legacy of these interventions is summed up in this deceptively simple question: what is naturalised in citizenisation? Some authors have begun to answer this question by demonstrating how access to citizenship reproduces racialised, gendered, sexualised and class-based differences, not only through histories of exclusions (e.g. Joppke 2010, Motomura 2006, Smith 1997), but also as an enduring effect of colonial histories, immigration policies, or foundational conceptions of citizenship itself (e.g. as birthright or as property; Anderson 2013, Bhambra 2015,

8 As stated above, much of the existing qualitative empirical research on citizenship attribution focuses on one specific 'moment' in the conferment or acquisition of citizen-like statuses: citizenship ceremonies, or citizenship or language tests and education. The little empirical research that explores the naturalisation process *as a whole* does so either from the perspective of applicants (Centlivres 1993, Bassel et al. ongoing) or from the perspective of politicians or other agents of the state (Helbling 2008, 2010). My research fills a gap by documenting and analysing how the naturalisation process is enacted and experienced by *both* applicants and institutional actors (from the private and public sectors).

Brace 2004, Stevens 2010, Shachar 2009). While these offer theoretical paths into denaturalising universal citizenship, the empirical question of how we can track the production and reproduction of this and other ideals of citizenship remains open. In other words, citizenisation forces the question of *how* identities, ideas (and other objects) are (re)produced in the everyday *practices* of allocating citizen-like or ‘full’ citizenship status. In turn, naturalisation leads us into the diverse ways in which the natural and the artificial, the abstract and the ‘material’, the political and the social, are variously entangled, negotiated, exchanged, or stabilised.

I take the phrase ‘the social life’ of citizenisation and naturalisation from critical policy studies that follow the social life of policy and explore the constitutive role of experience, culture and enactment in policy (Clarke et al. 2015, Shore and Wright 1997, Shore et al. 2011). Rejecting a conception of policy as a coercive instrument of the state or as a fixed document, this scholarship conceives of policy as performative, relational and as producing multiple effects. It emphasises the ‘lived and embodied conception of “doing” rather than interpreting or implementing policy’ (Newman 2013, 257). Furthermore, like much of the policy world today, citizenisation (including naturalisation) is a dispersed form of governance that involves multiple actors across multiple sites – public, semi-public, private, and voluntary. Consequently, as Clarke et al. point out (2015, 52; also Clarke et al. 2014), it is hard to contain it within the linear narratives of ‘path-dependence’ (Bloemraad 2006, Janoski 2010, Goodman 2014) or cross-national convergence (Joppke 2010, Koopmans et al. 2012).

Going a step further, Shona Hunter (2008) proposes a view that positions policy itself as ‘actant’ or agent in policy-making. Drawing on Actor Network Theory, Hunter describes this approach as ‘rethinking policy documents as in some sense “living”; . . . as the product of relational practices, but also as productive of social relations.’ (2008, 507) While Hunter also attributes to policy the capacity to ‘feel’ (2008, 507), I rather see the significance in considering how policies *mediate* activities and relations, while they will also change as they move through sites and subjects. In this light, citizenisation and naturalisation policies are ‘integral parts of relational webs, constituting the link between individual selves and multiple others’ (Hunter 2008, 523) via a range of practices (reading, writing, listening, looking, assessing, filling forms, etc.). Put simply, citizenisation measures inscribe different parties into different relationships: to each other, to the state, to nation(s), to space and place (here and there), to time (past [his]stories, aspirations, waiting times), etc. Applying for settlement or citizenship puts in motion a range of social relations and interactions that are lived, embodied, felt, reasoned, processed, and documented by those involved, in ways that exceed the kind of coherence that policy, as an instrument of the state, is expected to confer onto its subjects. In this sense, policies themselves will be differently enacted. Tracking how policy moves through different settings, and how it moves (through) subjects, captures not only ‘something of the livedness’ (Lewis 2010, 214) of the policy’s social life (how it is lived), but captures something of its *live*-ness as well (how it is ‘living’ [Hunter 2008, 507]).

Theorising the formal process of citizenisation as embedded in, and constitutive of, a complex field of material, discursive, imaginative practices yields a fuller understanding of how 'naturalisation' is variously enacted and variously attached to and detached from citizenisation. Methodologically, studying the social life of citizenisation entails not a top-down approach, nor does it beckon a bottom-up approach. Rather, it consists of 'studying through' (Wright and Reinhold 2011) citizenisation and its 'policy world': tracking the ways in which policies are variously and sometimes contestably enacted by different people in different situations (Shore and Wright 2011, 8). There are several examples of studies where researchers follow the 'social life' of policy, such as Shona Hunter's (2015) study of the psychosocial life of British diversity policy, or Gregory Feldman's (2012) ethnography of the daily practices of European migration policy. But for the purposes that interest me here, namely the interactions between citizenisation and naturalisation and the question of how the artificial and the 'natural' are variously entangled and negotiated in the stabilisation of 'citizenship', I turn to two feminist ethnographies in science and technology studies by way of illustrating the 'ontological politics' (Mol 2002) and 'ontological choreographies' (Thompson 2005) that take place in citizenisation and naturalisation policies.

Annemarie Mol's (2002) ethnography of the day-to-day diagnosis and treatment of atherosclerosis in a Dutch hospital emphasises how enacting identities is not only social, but also practical and material. Mol describes her analysis as theorizing the 'ontological politics' of medicine: 'a politics that has to do with the way in which problems are framed, bodies are shaped, and lives are pushed and pulled into one shape or another' (2002, viii). Translating this into the field of citizenship attribution, it draws attention to how mundane bureaucratic processes and face-to-face interactions enact *multiple* subjects and realities, rather than seeing these practices in the way that government policy is commonly understood; that is, as simply responding to a singular 'reality' (e.g. 'British citizenship' or any other citizenship-as-nationality) or singular 'subject' (the 'EU' applicant, the 'foreigner', the 'refugee'). Furthermore, these multiple enactments are more than different perspectives on the same thing. Mol cautions against what she calls perspectivalism, which remains in the realm of meaning, in the realm of how people talk about and interpret the object – citizenship for our purposes here – without considering how the object itself might change and take multiple forms. Mol suggests that to tackle the limits of perspectivalism we need to foreground 'practicalities, materialities, *events*' so that, in the case that interests me here, citizenisation and naturalisation become 'part of what is done *in practice*' (Mol 2002, 13; second emphasis added).

To illustrate, the stories that applicants and institutional actors told me in interviews reveal something of their feelings, experiences, and interpretations of what citizenisation is and of their part in the process. But they also told me a lot about how citizenisation is done in practice, and how their lives – be it their working lives or domestic lives – are touched by it in practical and material terms: from child-care arrangements around language or citizenship classes, to taking time off work,

to preparing for the citizenship test, to ordering catering for citizenship ceremonies, or running photocopies to send someone's settlement application to UK Visa and Immigration (UKVI).⁹ Seeing citizenisation through the lens of practices and events reveals not perspectival cleavages between applicants and institutional actors, but the necessary interactions between several actors and bureaucratic/administrative processes in making citizenisation and citizenship themselves a reality that impacts on their everyday lives, let alone one that might radically change their lives.

Recognising the significance of such practicalities, moreover, not only tells us something of how citizenisation becomes a tangible object in people's lives. It also reveals how citizenisation brings forth *multiple* realities. Thus citizenisation is a site of enactments that bring about the 'citizen multiple', to paraphrase Mol (2002), where the ways that subjects and objects are handled in practice are not the same from one site to another: for example, the world of the 'Settlement Checking Service' that local authorities offer is haunted by the figure of the sham marriage because the applications that they are authorised to check are only those to do with SET(M): 'settlement on the basis of marriage (or civil partnership) to a British spouse'. In that world, a person using this service at her local authority is likely to be treated as a suspect spouse. If she is successful and proceeds to obtaining British nationality, the same person moves to the world of ceremonies where she may be seen as a 'model citizen' because of her fluency in the English language (see Fortier 2017). In the end, however, through a set of bureaucratic, performative, affective, and material interactions and practices, the applicant comes out at the end of the process as a normalised genuine spouse and integrated new citizen.

This is not to take away any agency from applicants or state agents. One of the aims of Charis Thompson's work discussed next is to insert an ontological connection between selves (the making of personhood) and things (documented evidence of 'genuine marriage') to show how objectification does not necessarily deny agency, but that agency rather 'sometimes *requires* periods of objectification.' (2005, 185). As stated above, citizenisation is a form of dispersed governance that is not singular, unidirectional, or uniform, and it cannot be removed from the relational, discursive, affective and material practices that sustain it or exceed it. However, we must caution against the risk that might result from prioritizing contingency and multiplicity at the cost of omitting the inequalities and relations of power that are inherent in citizenship attribution. As John Law points out, Mol's 'ontological politics' draws attention the '*political* reasons for preferring and enacting one kind of *reality* rather than another.' (Law 2004, 13; second emphasis added)

And so we return to naturalisation as ontological process embedded in citizenisation measures. Charis Thompson (2005) uses the concept of 'ontological choreography' – 'the dynamic coordination of the technical, scientific, kinship, gender, emotional, legal, political, and financial' (2005, 8) – to examine processes of socialisation, normalisation, naturalisation and subjectification in her ethnography

9 Formerly UK Border Agency, UKBA.

of assisted reproductive technology clinics. Drawing on her explanation of socialisation (2005, 80) for my purposes here, socialisation includes practices of normalisation by which 'new data' (new policy measures, new instruments, new staff, new roles, new applicants, new costs, new administrative constraints and possibilities, changes in government and in the political landscape) are incorporated into pre-existing procedures and objects of the various organisations (public and private) charged with dispensing a range of services to those seeking permanent residence or citizenship. Thompson adds that naturalisation 'is an important part of normalization'.

This meaning of naturalization encompasses . . . ways of going on that do not seem to be driven by underlying causal or rational logics and that apply as much to the practice of science and formal reasoning as they do to tacit forms of socialization. (2005, 81)

Taking the artifice of citizenship as a premise, understanding naturalisation as part of normalisation invites an analysis of the ways in which the artifice is concealed or rendered irrelevant in citizenisation. The task, then (paraphrasing Thompson 2005, 145), is to decipher the ways in which certain bases of citizenship differentiation are foregrounded and recrafted while others are minimised to make those who seek and pay for citizenisation come out at the end, through legitimate chains of connections (being applicant who was at first suspect but then not, with proof of residency + language test + proof of genuine marriage), as insiders rather than outsiders. What kinds of material, discursive, affective economies are involved in these chains of connection?

Let us return to the 'choice/ascription' distinction that we opened with and consider birthright. It is a crucial site where transactions between the natural and the cultural take place in citizenisation processes, particularly in the conferment of nationality. I argue elsewhere (Fortier 2013) that ideas of kin and birth endure in contemporary practices of legal naturalisation, which reaffirm the transgenerational transmission of citizenship by birth (through parentage, *jus sanguinis*, or through territory, *jus soli*) as the preferred mode of citizenship acquisition and transmission. This renaturalises the heterosexual, reproductive family and its embedding within citizenship (Somerville 2005). But in addition, embedded in 'birthright citizenship' is a coupling of loyalty to the country with reproduction that places obligations of (presumed) heterosexual intimacy and national perpetuity on the presumed autonomous citizens who has 'chosen' to naturalise. What is more, the system of birthright entitlements and kinship that dominates not only our imagination but also our laws in the allotment of political membership serve to renaturalise 'the "wealth-preserving" aspect of hereditary citizenship' (Shachar and Hirschl 2007, 274)' and to preserve the unequal global distribution of the world's riches. While where we are born may be 'accidental', the unequal distribution of our ensuing life-chances is not (also Shachar 2009). The point is that against the distinction between 'ascribed' citizenship (birthright) and 'chosen' citizenship (naturalisation), thinking

of naturalisation as part of normalisation takes us to unpacking the transaction that takes place between 'choice' (culture) and 'birth' (nature) in legal naturalisation where the naturalised citizens are expected to transmit citizenship through birth to their offspring. This reproduces the 'natural' order of the reproductive heterosexual family as the founding unit of the national community, and it naturalises the unequal global distribution of life chances through birthright.

Conclusion

This article interrupts the linear narrative that posits the conferment of citizenship (legal naturalisation) as the natural outcome of citizenisation. The article offers instead to rethink the relationship between naturalisation and citizenisation through an analysis of their intertwined *social life*. The proposed framework bridges institutional approaches that privilege the formal, legal procedures with social life approaches inspired by feminist and anti-racist critiques of essentialism, that privilege experiences, practices, objects, and discursive and affective relations. An understanding of naturalisation as a *social ontological process* supports the bridge between the two approaches. 'Ontological process' refers to the ways in which different categories or locales of existence (the self, society, culture, the state, the nation, [imperial] histories, geographies) are combined to produce understandings of what citizenship 'really is'.

The proposed framework includes methodological and theoretical elements. Methodologically, it consists of 'studying through' citizenisation and naturalisation measures as they circulate, are enacted and experienced in different settings by different actors, the latter including citizens and 'noncitizens'. Theoretically, extending a social understanding of naturalisation into formal citizenisation measures is to scrutinise how citizenisation is framed, enacted and experienced, and to unpack the different 'realities' assumed under 'citizenship'.

Taking the unnatural character of citizenship as an object to unpack, this approach concerns itself with how the artifice is concealed or rendered irrelevant in citizenisation processes. In this framework, citizenisation forces the question of *how* and *which* identities, ideas, knowledges, affects, relations are (re)produced in the name of redressing the citizenship-deficit of immigrants. It rejects, furthermore, the contention that citizenisation only concerns immigrants. Rather, citizenisation assumes that citizenship is never fully complete, and that the 'integration' measures that it is often reduced to interpellate all members of a nation-state, regardless of their citizenship. A social analysis of naturalisation, for its part, leads us into the diverse ways in which the natural and the artificial, the abstract and the 'material', the political and the social, are variously entangled, negotiated, exchanged, or stabilised. In this framework, the differentiation between ascribed citizenship (birthright) and chosen citizenship (naturalisation) falls apart when put under the scrutiny of the transactions between 'nature' and 'culture', or 'choice' and 'obligation'.

that circulate in the process of ‘making’ citizens. More broadly, prying apart the exchanges between nature and culture that support the endurance of birthright as the privileged means of transmitting citizenship maintains the global inequality of life chances that result from the ‘accident’ of birth.

In sum, analysing the social life of citizenisation and naturalisation puts into relief joint processes of ontologising, normalising, subjectification, and stratification. The purpose of a framework that asks the deceptively simple question ‘what is naturalised in citizenisation?’ is to shed more light on the foundations of citizenship. It is to go beyond understandings of citizenship as inclusion/exclusion, us/them, inside/outside. While citizenship is undoubtedly a form of border control, it is also a site that rests on and reproduces a host of other assumptions about geographies, personhood, temporalities and histories, desires and anxieties that should not be ignored. Understanding citizenship today requires different concepts, methods, and data (Isin 2015). The analytical framework outlined here contributes to filling this gap with a theory and method for researching the social life of citizenisation and naturalisation that will offer a better understanding of how citizenship today is variously ‘made’, conceived, enacted, and experienced. Understanding how citizenisation and naturalisation function in tandem institutionally and socially is important if we are to gain a fuller grasp of the array of inequalities, old and new, that they produce and reproduce.

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Americans in the Making: Myths of Nation and Immigration in Naturalization Ceremonies in the United States

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Citizenship ceremonies have been practiced for at least a century in the United States. This article explores what citizenship ceremonies – the rituals created to ‘make’ new citizens – can tell us about understandings of citizenship and the nation. Focusing on the case of the US, the paper asks who is being held up as the welcomed citizen and who is excluded in these public events. What does it mean to ‘welcome’ a new citizen and how are migration and national history imagined in these events? These questions become increasingly urgent in the context of securitization and given current debates about the withdrawal of citizenship from suspected ‘extremists’.¹

Introduction

In the middle of a crisis in the Middle East and a political crisis at home, which included the kidnapping of his daughter by terrorists from ‘Qumar’ and a situation of ‘high alert’ over Washington and much of the US, the fictional President Bartlett of *The West Wing* (a US political TV drama) hears that a bomb scare has meant that a group of citizands², mostly from ‘Arab countries’ have had their swearing of the citizenship oath cancelled. In response to this, he asks his aide:

We’re talking folks who have been interviewed and background-checked by two agencies, taken classes to learn our language, passed exams on our history and

1 This article is partly based on work from Bridget Byrne, *Making Citizens: Public Rituals and Personal Journeys to Citizenship* (2014) Palgrave Macmillan.

2 I use the word ‘citizand’ to refer to those who are not yet, but about to become, a new citizen of a country. This is similar to the use of ‘graduand’ to refer to the equivalent liminal status, of about to become a graduate.

government, and been fingerprinted twice; these are the kinds of Arabs we're talking about?³

When his aide replies 'Yes', he is instructed to find an auditorium somewhere to hold the ceremony. At the end of a difficult day, at the end of the episode, he is called to see the ceremony in fact taking place within the White House. He leads the pledge of allegiance and the words of the pledge play over shots of his wife and daughter getting into a limo to leave the White House to go to their country residence, away from the trauma of the kidnapping, the daughter with her head on her mother's lap.

In these short scenes we have the dramatization of the nation-as-family (represented by the actual family of the president) under threat in multiple directions from 'bad' Arabs who must be fought in order to protect the nation-family (Berlant 1997). This is then juxtaposed by the 'good' Arabs, who can be welcomed, given hospitality and brought into the democratic family by their oaths of allegiance and citizenship. The naturalization ceremony is used as a symbol of the idea of inclusion and democracy. In their desire to become citizens, having passed all the state scrutiny, they have proved their worth and earned a welcome. They have answered the 'foreigner question' which Derrida suggests undermines absolute hospitality (Derrida 2000). Their acceptance into the nation-family also serves to prove the integrity and worth of the US state.

This article examines the moment of the making of new citizens – that is the creation of citizens of election rather than birth. It argues that these rituals of naturalization are important because of the insights they can reveal about how citizenship of the nation-state is understood. These public rituals of citizenship can tell us both about who is excluded from this conception of citizenship and what forms of citizenship (and the rights which are attached to them) are valued. In looking at the US naturalization ceremony, I ask: how is the state choosing to represent both itself and migrants? Who is held up as the citizen to be welcomed and embraced by the state and what forms of citizenship are silenced or rejected in this representation? I will also ask: what kind of potential identities and relationships – local, national and more global – are suggested by the ceremonies and what identities are suppressed or explored?

Naturalization ceremonies seek to endow the moment of granting citizenship to migrants with a public – or semi-public – ritual. The creation of a ritual to 'make' citizens also provides an opportunity to assert what citizenship and nationality mean in particular places and particular times. These invented traditions (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983) take place in the context of a range of often heated public debates around immigration and the control of borders. In the context of this growing securitization (Walters 2004), it is crucial to interrogate citizenship ceremonies to ask: who is being held up as the welcomed citizen, and who is excluded in these

3 The episode 'Jefferson Lives' was first broadcast in 2003.

public rituals? What does it mean to ‘welcome’ a new citizen to citizenship and how is migration imagined in these events?

These questions are interesting because the naturalization or citizenship ceremony is not only about the making of citizens (most of whom are of course already citizens of other countries⁴). The ceremony also marks a potentially more complicated border crossing from being simply foreign to being a national – something more than a citizen. National citizenship is often constructed as inevitable and something that has ‘always been there’. This is indeed suggested in the term ‘naturalization’ – to establish something as if native – or natural. But at the same time, the use of the term naturalization for new citizens highlights the idea that the person is not naturally of the state – and perhaps more particularly of the nation. If you have to be ‘naturalized’ how can you be native? Within the term of naturalization, there is the suggestion of impossibility – you may be naturalized, but of course no one can be ‘made’ natural – it suggests artifice and ‘unnaturalness’. This raises the question of whether the naturalized citizen will ever be really seen as equal to, to properly belong, like the (real) national. The possibility, under certain conditions, of the revocation of naturalization also points to its potential non-permanence and a less-than-full-citizenship (Anderson 2008) as does the suspicion faced by certain forms of dual citizenship (Stasiulis and Ross 2006). Thus, these ceremonies need to be understood in their contemporary context of a public discourse which signals a retreat from multiculturalism and continuing debates about immigration and national security. These emphasize loyalty to nation and integration into national culture. This has also shaped responses to migration and a reconfiguration of immigration and citizenship regimes.

In the next section, I will consider the changing conceptualizations of citizenship within scholarly literature and the role of naturalization in these shifting understandings. The following section will discuss the methodology of the research before addressing the specific character of US naturalization ceremonies. The third section will examine the ways in which the US is represented in the ceremonies as a ‘nation of immigrants’ and how cultural and national diversity is represented. Finally, the article will also consider the rhetoric behind the oath of allegiance, and tensions around the possibility of new citizens’ oath-taking not being sincere.

Who Is the Citizen?

Classic Marshallian (Marshall 1950) approaches to citizenship have been criticised for being too focused on stasis and therefore inadequate for dealing with the deterritorialised rights and identities of a more mobile society (Castles and Davidson 2000; Urry 2000). Increased transnational movement raises questions about the importance of citizenship. Many rights that are associated with citizenship are being

4 Some may be stateless or refugees.

extended to resident immigrants without citizenship, particularly under the influence of international human rights discourse (Soysal 1995). Thus Seyla Benhabib argues that we are facing a 'disaggregation of citizenships' where the formerly related dimensions of citizenship (collective identity, privileges of political membership and entitlement to social rights and benefits) are being 'unbundled', at least for those who have European membership (Benhabib 2008: 45). However, in the light of debates around immigration, border control and sovereignty which featured in both the recent referendum in the UK and the presidential campaign in the US, these perhaps optimistic reflections on resident rights need to be reconsidered.

Whilst there are many different forms of citizenship; ways of understanding citizenship and making citizenship claims, it is clear that nation-state citizenship is critical in determining where people can live, work, create families and travel to. Despite claims to the contrary, citizenship is never neutral. In the context of Western countries, notions of citizenship have emerged out of a racialised, classed and gendered history of colonialism and post-colonialism which has shaped both nation and migration (McClintock 1995; Isin 2012; Byrne 2014). The formation of the nation-state system and the technological developments that enabled the state's control of movement over state borders emerged within the colonial context. Benedict Anderson (Anderson 1991) has argued that the development of the idea of the nation was dependent on the technological development of the printing press. With the development of a 'national' literature and news, it was possible to create a sense of the 'we' in the imagined community – people with whom you had a sense of connection and belonging even though you would never meet. In a less well-cited article, Anderson (Anderson 1994) also argues that the national was born of mobility and, in particular, exile produced through industrialisation and imperialism. As people moved away from familiar homes to be educated, to labour in industry, and to colonise or be remade as colonial subjects, then the imagined 'home' of the national narration attained meaning. The nation was recognised and created from looking back at it from a distance. The development of the technological means for spreading these narratives was critical to this process of formalising membership, as were the nation-state's gradual control of birth registration and of movement across its borders (Torpey 2000). These technologies of citizenship enabled new forms of government.

For Foucault, the relationship of race to the state is tied into the development of regulatory power in the form of biopolitics. The state constructs race and difference so as to justify its surveillance and management of the population in defence of the national race which is, by definition, threatened by external, Othered races (Foucault 2003). This notion of race and racial superiority could readily be used to justify colonialism. It was also highly gendered. It is therefore perhaps unsurprising that the rights attached to citizens have not been evenly available to women, to sexual minorities, to the working class and to colonized and racialised others. There has been considerable research on the gendered, sexualised and racialised nature of citizenship, pointing out the ways which women, sexual minorities and

racialised groups have less secure claims to the rights that citizenship supposedly endows (Barton 1993; Paul 1997; Donovan, Heaphy et al. 1999; Lewis 2004; De Genova 2007; Lister 2007; Lister 2008). For some women (and some racialized or socially disempowered groups), before striving to be recognized as citizens, they struggle to be recognized as human beings of equal worth and dignity to others: what Arendt calls ‘the right to have rights’ (Arendt 1958: 177). In fact, citizenship – how it is understood, who is said to possess it – has often emerged out of a process of differentiating between citizens and those gendered, raced and classed others who could never be citizens – the anti-citizens (Barbero 2012). The construction of the anti-citizen – for example in the figure of the illegal migrant; the terrorist, the uncivilized other, the deviant – can tell us much about the contours of citizenship. It can also act as a warning to citizens about how they should behave. Yet Engin Isin, encourages us to think of ‘citizens without frontiers’ – and to consider the acting (rather than moving) subject (Isin 2012). What Isin calls ‘citizenship acts’ are able to cross the borders of citizenship by subjects *acting as* citizens, even where the state may not recognise them as such (Isin and Nielsen 2008). This is a form of citizenship which rejects – or in Isin’s terms ‘transverses’ – state borders and state definitions. Acts of citizenship frequently involve the voicing of rights and claims which go beyond the national frame (such as the anti-apartheid movement or the activities of Greenpeace or WikiLeaks). They also involve contesting both borders and normative frames. For Isin, ‘a fundamental feature of citizenship act is that it exercises either a right that does not exist or a right that does exist but which is enacted by a political subject who does not exist in the eyes of the law’ (Isin 2012:13).

However, rather than citizenship acts or the anti-citizens, this article is engaged with the question of ‘new’ and formalised citizenship. This is the state citizenship produced by the transnational movements and settlements of people. It involves the granting of citizenship of a nation to people who do not have it by virtue of where they were born or the citizenship status of their parents. These new citizens are not born to the citizenship which they now acquire, they have moved towards it. They have travelled both geographically from one national space to another and proceeded through a range of bureaucratic processes. Obtaining new citizenship is often shaped by a desire to stay, as it gives the right of residence. But it is also often accompanied by the desire to move – to be able to move across national borders with more ease and with the assurance that you can return (Byrne 2014). New citizens, how they come to be citizens, what conditions they have to fulfil to acquire citizenship and how they are received by the state and society of their new nations can tell us much about citizenship itself. Before considering the naturalization ceremonies in the US, the following section will give a brief account of the methodology of the research.

Researching Citizenship Ceremonies

The research behind this article arose out of a larger project comparing citizenship ceremonies in six different countries.⁵ The material in this article is based on the observation of three ceremonies in the United States, two of which (in Manhattan and Brooklyn) were conducted by the author and one (in Oakland, California) by researcher Bethan Harries. Detailed notes were taken during the observations as well as some photographs of the building and decoration etc. Officials who were involved in organizing the ceremonies were also interviewed.

Inevitably, these observations can only tell us about the conduct of those ceremonies in those places on that particular day. Nonetheless, there is sufficient uniformity in the way the ceremonies were conducted, as was confirmed by the officials, that we can take them as generally representative. In fact, in many ways, this limited survey demonstrates that, even internationally, citizenship ceremonies tend to follow a fairly uniform pattern (Byrne 2012; Byrne 2014). They generally take place in similar kinds of public buildings displaying familiar national symbols – flags and heads of state – with comparable officials and dignitaries presiding over them. In terms of the format of the event, all of the ceremonies focus centrally on the taking of an oath or pledge of allegiance and the distribution of certificates of citizenship. And all finish with the playing and singing of the national anthem. Thus there is an internationally recognised lexicon of citizenship ceremonies and often what is most interesting are the incidental remarks and practices which are wrapped around the more expected elements. Yet at the same time, the narration of nation in these events is varied, depending on the atmospheres created, the references made to national myths history and present and future possibilities nation. It is the US narrations which are of interest in this article and the following sections will explore how the history of immigration to the US is represented in the ceremonies as well as tensions in the relationship that is suggested between new citizens and their ‘former’ countries and the uncertainties which can be suggested about the sincerity of oath-taking.

Naturalization Ceremonies in the US

In the impressive, highly decorative and heavily gilded art deco Paramount Theatre in Oakland, California, the host of the naturalization ceremony welcomes the people who have come to receive their American citizenship: ‘America becomes a better place because of you. Everybody, thank you for becoming citizens.’ This is greeted by clapping and whoops from the audience. In less elaborate surroundings of the

⁵ The countries were: the US, Canada, Australia, the UK, Ireland and the Netherlands See Byrne, B. (2014). *Making Citizens: Public rituals and personal journeys to citizenship*. Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan. for more details

Brooklyn courthouse, which lacks the razzmatazz of the Californian ceremony, the presiding Judge declares: 'When I look at this gathering, I see the beautiful smiles of America'. The idea of a country built on a history of immigration is a repeated theme which also ran through the ceremonies observed in the United States, Canada and Australia, three former settler colonies of the British Empire (Byrne 2014). However, this does not mean that the position of the immigrant is always a valued one, free of hostility and suspicion. In the context of the United States, there are ongoing political debates about what type of immigrants should be allowed to enter the country, how immigrants' cultural differences – and potentially divided loyalties – may or may not pose a threat to the country, and how to address undocumented migration. This debate has been heightened in the 2016 presidential campaign of Donald Trump. In addition, emphasis on immigrant contribution silences the histories of those who inhabited the land before the 'settlers' and those who were brought to the US as slaves (Glenn 2002; Kerber 2005).

The US has a long history of conducting ceremonies to celebrate the creation of new citizens and as a public arena for the taking of an oath or pledge of loyalty. The taking of an oath (most usually in court) was required in the first US naturalization law of 1790, but a standard text was only developed in 1929 (Bloemraad 2006: 21). The ceremonies are also internationally familiar: representations of naturalization ceremonies have featured in popular television series, and films which are marketed globally, of which *The West Wing* is just one.⁶ Thus ceremonies in the US have provided influential models for the more recent creation of ceremonies in Europe (Byrne 2014). In a similar way, several European countries have also introduced regimes of testing for new citizens (Byrne 2016).

Nations of Immigrants?

The national narrative presented by the officials in the citizenship ceremonies in the United States all rely at least partially on the notion of a nation of immigrants (Honig 2001). In many cases, the new citizens are presented in the ceremonies as the archetypal citizen in the immigrant nation. As the host of the Manhattan ceremony puts it: 'Perhaps your greatest responsibility is to remind native-born citizens what being an American is about'. In a video which is shown at the beginning of the ceremonies in America, the US immigration services director starts a presentation on Ellis Island stating:

The United States is a nation of immigrants. We have always been a nation of immigrants; we're the only country in the world that opens its arms as wide as we do to

6 Relatively recent representations of citizenship ceremonies include episodes of *Ugly Betty*, *The Real Housewives of Orange County*, *Hell's Kitchen*, *NCIS*. Popular representations of citizenship testing are also common – but both are outnumbered by fiction which centers around 'citizenship marriages', where people have marriages of convenience to allow them to stay in their country of choice (these include *Green Card*, *Muriel's Wedding*, *The Proposal* and *The Wedding Banquet*).

immigrants. I think the new blood, the new culture, the new experiences which come to this nation are what make us different and are what make America the country it is today (emphasis added).

Aside from the somewhat problematic biologicistic reference to ‘new blood’, this narrative of the ‘arms open wide’ to immigrants belies a much more complicated history. The presence of Native Americans who were in America before the colonialists and immigrants is overlooked (Glenn, 2002). Also silenced is the history of the forced immigration of slaves. In the pre-recorded speech made by President Obama, which is shown at the ceremony, a similar silencing is found. However, on other occasions (in speeches where he is present at the ceremonies), Obama does sometimes (although not every time⁷) mention these two groups. For instance, at a ceremony on the 4th of July 2012, he said: ‘we are a nation of immigrants. Unless you are one of the first Americans, a Native American, we are all descended from folks who came from somewhere else – whether they arrived on the Mayflower or a slave ship, whether they came through Ellis Island or crossed the Rio Grande.’ (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2012/07/04/remarks-president-naturalization-ceremony> accessed 2.4.14). Nonetheless, the rendition of slaves as ‘fellow immigrants’ remains a very odd formulation which cannot do justice to what Obama, in a famous pre-election speech, called ‘the original sin of slavery’ (Byrne 2011).

Finally, the expansive and welcoming suggestion of ‘arms open wide’ is contradicted by a long history of racialised immigration policies which have sought to restrict immigration from particular ethnic and racialised groups. For example, the Exclusions Act of 1882 prohibited the naturalization of Chinese immigrants and controlled the entry of Chinese migrants to such an extent that Chinese immigrants sometimes spent years living on Angel Island in San Francisco Bay (the equivalent to Ellis Island in Upper New York Bay) (Jaggers, Gabbard et al. 2014). In 1917, the ‘Asiatic-Barred Zone’ was established, which prohibited migration from China, India, the Middle East and the Philippines. In addition, there have been quotas in immigration since 1921, (Jaggers, Gabbard et al. 2014: 5). It was only in the 1940s that racial restrictions on naturalization were ended and finally in 1952 that an act was passed which removed race or national origin as a criterion for American citizenship (Bloemraad 2006: 22). The United States was also very late in signing up to United Nations provisions on refugees (which originated in 1951, but the USA did not conform to it until The Refugee Act of 1980) (Jaggers, Gabbard et al. 2014: 8–9).

The idea of ‘arms open wide’ is also undermined by the continued stringent effort of the state to control migration (particularly undocumented migration – often referred to as ‘illegal migrants’) and ongoing debates about the ‘threat’ of immigration to security and the economy of the United States. Immigration and

7 It was not possible to discern a pattern in the inclusion or not of these references.

outsiders are continually represented as a threat to the security of the nation. The debates are often conducted in racialised terms where particular national or ethnic groups are deemed to offer a specific threat. Popular cultural movements, such as the minute men patrolling the southern borders of the United States, also belie this image of unqualified hospitality (Weber 2008; Isin 2012).

Whilst the narrative of a nation of immigrants present in the ceremonies may provide a rather partial view of American history and nation-building, it nonetheless constitutes an important myth which is commonly asserted in national life in the US. In some ways, reference to this foundational myth serves to privilege the position of naturalized citizens. In a seeming reversal of some of the hostility to immigration, there is a suggestion that naturalized citizens are somehow *more* ideal citizens than those born in the US (Honig 2001). Yet in the broader context, this idealization of the new citizen can go alongside a hostility to immigrants through the creation of boundaries of legality/illegality. It is the technologies of border and immigration control that in part create certain migrants as illegal (De Genova 2002). Furthermore, the discourse of the special role of naturalized citizens still marks the new citizens out as different from other citizens because they are immigrants rather than citizens by birth.

The idea of new citizens as special worked with a narrative suggested in the ceremonies which positioned migrants as having a closer relationship to the 'American Dream'. The idea of the American Dream is referred to at several points in the ceremonies. In the videos shown, the director of the USCIS explains how the 100 million Americans who can trace their ancestry back to Ellis Island are connected by 'the dream', concluding 'In America, anything is possible'. The welcome video recorded by President Obama also claims: 'Always remember that in America, no dream is impossible... You can help write the next great chapter in our great American story'.

Similarly, in their speeches, the judges in Manhattan and Brooklyn use their own or their families' histories of immigration to illustrate The Dream. The judge in Manhattan explained her own history of migrating with her family from Lithuania to Israel and then on to the US explained how:

I became more comfortable, I learnt English from the TV. The school was good and I got into an Ivy League college. Seventeen years in a justice department. You could say I realised the American Dream.

Whilst the Brooklyn judge produced her own family's immigration story as a final flourish to her speech, before striding out from the court with her legal gown ballooning out behind her:

All my grandparents migrated to this country. I lived with my grandmother who migrated from Russia. She came steerage in a boat and landed at Ellis Island as a 14 year old. She worked in a sweatshop making dresses. Would she have imagined her granddaughter would be a federal judge? Have big dreams for you and your children and I wish you all the best.

These personal accounts show the power of the notion of the American Dream and how it is referred to in ways which suggest that it is open to all through immigration, or even somehow *more* possible for those who emigrate, or their near ancestors who have the fresh energy and commitment to make the Dream a reality. In the rendition in the ceremonies, this retelling of the story of the 'American Dream' relies on the idea of the social mobility of families and the possibility of fulfilling of the Dream over generations. The suggestion is that the journey towards the Dream may be completed by the new citizens' children, or their children's children.

Part of the problem of the narrative of a nation built by immigrants as produced in the ceremonies is that it sits awkwardly with the knowledge that there were already indigenous people whose rights to land and nationhood were ignored and who have historically been excluded from citizenship. There is also the question of how to fit in the large community of people whose ancestors were not immigrants following a dream, or compelled to leave their homes to escape oppression for which the US provided a refuge. How can narratives of the American Dream accommodate the stories of those forcibly brought to America as slaves? There is a history of the denial of rights of citizenship, including the long-lasting deprivation of many rights that African Americans suffered under the 'Jim Crow' laws. The historic segregation of public spaces, access to public services such as education and health and the de facto disenfranchisement of black voters have continuing economic, social and cultural effects (Alexander 2010). Yet these histories are not told in the ceremonies which focus only on new citizens and the experience of migration.

Given the ways in which immigration and citizenship rights in the United States are bound up with a history of exclusions and discrimination, it is notable that, whilst there were references made to civil and political rights in some of the US ceremonies and a considerable encouragement given to registering for voting, no mention was made of this history which might disrupt the 'nation of immigrants' narrative.

Stand up and Cheer for Your Country

The naturalization ceremonies observed in the US emphasized cultural and national difference of the new citizens whilst at the same time suggesting that the ceremonies have a function of a ritual which involves moving from one status (the prior nationality) to another (American). The ceremonies in both California and Manhattan followed a similar format which involved both identifying the citizands' nationalities and then appearing to distance the participants from them. As the master of ceremonies, in Manhattan introduces it:

There are 140 people here today. You have many things in common, but you are also a very diverse group from 37 different countries. Today you will *all stand as one* and become citizens (emphasis added).

What might be seen as the wonder of diversity is presented at the Oakland ceremony which had a high energy, show-business entertainment feeling to it. The MC litters his announcements with jokes and interaction with the audience. To gasps and cheers he tells the audience that there are 1399 people here representing 95⁸ countries, 'but in just a few minutes, just one'. He had explained that, although it was a legal ceremony, he wanted everyone to feel able to clap and cheer as much as they want. In the manner of a 'warm-up' host before a television broadcast, he gets everyone to practice being loud and cheering. He says 'maybe we need something to cheer for. A lot of people from a small country are here'. He goes on to ask everyone to clap for 'Our friends from El Salvador' which is responded to by clapping. 'How about Mexico?': a question which is followed with very loud cheers, whistling and clapping. The celebration of diversity is also underlined a jokey routine he establishes where he amazes the audience by each new language he can speak (or at least say 'welcome' in). After speaking in Spanish; Mandarin; French ('One of America's first allies is here'); Russian (for 'our newest friends'); Hindi; Filipino, he jokes:

OK, I suppose I should stop now (more cheering and clapping). Besides, I see some faces up front looking like, 'Oh no, he's not going to do this for 88 more countries is he?' (followed by more laughter).

This polished performance demonstrates an embrace of difference, but care is taken to return to unity:

Oh shoot. I want to do one more. Can I?
Yes!
Let's hear it for the San Francisco Giants!

As this followed an important victory for the local baseball team, the theatre erupts in cheering with the loudest cheer of the day. Here the local is referenced as a common bond which trumps differences of national origin.

All the observed ceremonies in the United States had a ritual of calling out the countries people had come from, cheering them, before having the participants 'standing as one'. In the Brooklyn ceremony, the ritual of renouncing difference and former solidarities is made particularly starkly as, after the oaths have been made, the judge explains that she will call out each country and asks people to stand and clap the countries. She then goes through each of the 62 countries of origin saying 'Will the new citizen formerly from Please stand up'. This multiple repetition of the phrase of 'formerly from' served to underline the idea that a nationality has been left behind. As all of the citizands are finally standing up she concludes with 'Isn't that the most beautiful thing?'

8 This figure is slightly inflated as it counts countries according to how they appear on the original application form. Thus Czechoslovakia and the Czech Republic are both counted separately.

However, in these ceremonies, there was a tension between the symbolism of what the citizands were doing – marking a departure from a particular identity for the sake of a unifying identity of American – and the ways in which it was carried out. The performance of this ritual, in terms of the ways in which citizands participated in it as well as other remarks made by the judges or official hosts, served to work against the idea of the withdrawal of different cultural identities and produce a sense of American identity as a hyphenated identity which could include the new citizens' 'former' identities. In this model, loyalty, affection and the retention of a sense of cultural difference are preserved. This tension between renouncing 'former' countries of origin and retaining loyalty can be seen in the enthusiastic cheering for each country – and particularly those where many of the citizands came from, such as Mexico, El Salvador and the Philippines. There was also a sense that all countries were to be celebrated. Given the political climate and the enduring sense of Iran as part of the 'Axis of Evil', it was perhaps rare in the United States of 2012 to hear an enthusiastic cheer in response to the naming of Iran. The continued loyalty or affiliation to countries was also indicated by some citizands arriving wearing sweatshirts with the name of their homelands on them. In the Brooklyn ceremony, after the judge has gone through all the countries that people were 'formerly of', she appears to contradict the suggestion that the ceremony has involved relinquishing an identity or a national loyalty when she exhorts them:

Be proud of your own country – you don't have to give up anything of it. Don't give up the things in your heart; don't give up your language. Teach your children your language; don't give up your customs. Carry them with you and keep your connections to the country – explain and share your customs with others – what the specific food is. This world is in a bad place and you can't expect leaders to get it better. Explain to others what's special about your home country and build bridges.

The new citizens are left to negotiate the apparent contrast between pride for their 'home countries' and the declaration of their 'former' status. The following section will examine the oath of allegiance taken at the ceremonies which also continues this tension between loyalty to old and new national identities.

Taking the Oath

A key part of the naturalization ceremony is the oath or pledge of allegiance. As the judge in Manhattan pointed out, she needed to see each citizand saying it. The oath of allegiance in the US is a good example of an invented tradition which has the appearance of a long-standing, even ancient tradition (particularly suggested by the use of archaic language) but is in fact of relatively modern invention and which also continues to be subject to changes and modifications. The current oath of allegiance that citizands in the US have to take is as follows:

I hereby declare, on oath, that I absolutely and entirely renounce and abjure all allegiance and fidelity to any foreign prince or state or sovereignty of whom or which I have heretofore been a subject or citizen, that I will support and defend the Constitution and laws of the United States of America against all enemies, foreign and domestic, that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I will bear arms⁹ on behalf of the United States when required to by law, and that I take this obligation freely without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion, so help me God.

The oath to renounce allegiance to former countries again stands in strong contrast to the encouragement in the ceremonies to maintain cultural ties and affiliations to countries of origin (and indeed in contrast to the cheers of support for ‘former’ countries) as discussed in the previous section. Another particularly striking aspect of this oath is the complicated structure and old-fashioned language. This would appear to suggest that the oath has a similarly old heritage. However, whilst an oath of allegiance has always been a requirement in naturalization, the form it took was not made uniform at a national level until 1906. This reform of the oath also set out the requirement for a public ceremony, rather than court appearance (Aptekar 2012). The wording of the oath has undergone repeated modifications.

The last major alteration (the commitment to bear arms) introduced in 1952. The actual text of the oath is not enshrined in law in the United States, and the USCIS recently did consider changing the oath to simplify the language. However, this prompted sufficient opposition, from both politicians and the public, to block any changes.¹⁰ The oath begins with the requirement to ‘absolutely and entirely renounce and abjure all allegiance or fidelity to any foreign prince, state or sovereignty’ which would suggest hostility to dual citizenship. However, despite what the oath suggests, in practice, and in law, dual citizenship is not illegal in the United States and the government recognizes that naturalized US citizens may remain citizens in their country of birth.¹¹

The code covering the American oath of allegiance allows for the religious elements (‘so help me God’ and the word ‘oath’) to be omitted (and the oath replaced with ‘solemnly affirm’). However, in none of the ceremonies observed was this option exercised and it is not clear how easy it would be for citizens to choose to avoid religious declaration. The same applies for the commitment to ‘bear arms’ which may be omitted if it can be shown that participation in the military is contrary to a person’s beliefs. In the ceremonies, the oath of allegiance is followed by the pledge of allegiance to the flag, where the audience can also join in, saying:

I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

9 This can be omitted for those who have religious beliefs which oppose the taking of a combatant role <http://www.uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis/menuitem.5af9bb95919f35e66f614176543f6d1a/?vgnextoid=facdb8db8d7e37210VgnVCM100000082ca60aRCRD&vgnnextchannel=dd7ffe9dd4aa3210VgnVCM100000b92ca60aRCRD> (accessed 29/9/13).

10 <http://www.nationalreview.com/articles/208022/oath-ice/john-j-miller> (accessed 29/9/13).

11 See http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1753.html (accessed 29/9/13).

This ties citizenship clearly into association with the nation in what Arendt (Arendt 1958) described as the ‘conquest’ of the state by the nation, whereby the potentially more neutral bureaucratic functions of the state are saturated by the culturally specific practices of national identity, the most obvious of which in this instance is the religious component. The question of faith, in terms of the nature of the commitment to, or good faith of, the oath will be considered in the next section.

Does Saying It Make You a Citizen?

The taking of the oath is the moment when the citizands become citizens. The oaths are performative in the sense first outlined by J.L. Austin, that they involve not merely saying something, but actually *doing* something. The words call into being an act (Austin 1997: 235). The commonly cited examples of this are ‘I pronounce you man and wife’ or ‘I sentence you to imprisonment’. As the USCIS website puts it: ‘Taking the oath will complete the process of becoming a US citizen.’¹²

As Austin pointed out, however, performative utterances can be unsuccessful or, in his terms ‘unhappy’. (Austin 1997: 237). They may be infelicitous if the necessary circumstances to give them effect do not occur. But they also depend on the right intentions of the speaker. In the case of the oaths or pledges of allegiance and commitment, it is clear that there may be what Austin called ‘insincerities’. That those taking the oath may not feel sincere. This possibility gives rise to a certain tension behind oath-taking, in terms of how it is to be understood by those hearing the oath. Whilst there are no explicit means in the ceremonies by which the sincerity of the citizands is tested, there are nonetheless friendly suggestions that it might be a concern. For example, the judge in Brooklyn stopped the citizands as they began pledging the oath and starts again, urging them to ‘say it louder!’

It is clear that the citizands already know the correct deportment to use when swearing the oath of allegiance (and singing the national anthem) as they make the familiar gesture of the right hand placed over the position of their heart. Alongside the more explicit expression of concern that the oath should be said with conviction, or sincerity, the ceremonies also produce other performances of enthusiasm and patriotism towards the United States and becoming a citizen. For instance, the judge in Brooklyn begins with the question ‘is everyone excited?’ At each ceremony, the citizands are given small stars-and-stripes flags which at various times they are encouraged to wave by the ceremony officials who were themselves waving along energetically, in a manner akin to teachers at a school assembly. In both the Manhattan and the Oakland ceremony, a video shows a message from President Obama congratulating them on becoming American citizens. The video ends with the Lee Greenwood singing ‘God Bless America’, a song written by Irving

12 <http://www.uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis/menuitem.eb1d4c2a3e5b9ac89243c6a7543f6d1a/?vgnextoid=2335743ebbe8a310VgnVCM100000082ca60aRCRD&vgnextchannel=2335743ebbe8a310VgnVCM100000082ca60aRCRD> (accessed 29/9/13).

Berlin in 1918 and which is commonly played at national and sporting events.¹³ The video accompanying the song shows iconic pictures of American landscapes and buildings and monuments, as well as the subtitles to the song. The citizands are encouraged to sing along to the song and wave their mini flags. As the host in Manhattan says: 'This is your day, be proud and sing it loud. You're US citizens and we're seeking the next American idol' (audience laughs). In a further injunction to take the ceremony in the right spirit, the citizands are urged: 'however you choose to celebrate this day, please celebrate it.' In conversation and during the interviews, the officials also emphasize their perception that the ceremonies and the swearing of the oath are meaningful to the citizands by pointing out how frequently citizands cry during the ceremony. In these cases, the outward expression of emotion is taken as reassurance that the inward intention is sincere.

This emotional display is not only performed by the citizands (and their guests), but also by officials who take part in the ceremonies and often explain how much they enjoy organizing and witnessing the ceremonies. The judge in Brooklyn said to the audience:

This is the best part of my job and I say it from my heart. [...] I'm the lucky person who gets to stand here and say "welcome", we are so glad you decided to become American.

This is another reminder of the potential not to be welcomed to the US. As one of the officials at the Manhattan ceremony pointed out, much of the judge's work would involve deportations. Thus, in contrast to a deportation hearing which potentially rips people away from the lives they are living and hope to live, at the ceremonies, people are pleased to see her. Acts of expulsion and deportation of course constitute an important distinction between the citizen and non-citizen, since only the citizen has truly permanent rights of settlement (although in some cases these rights are less secure for immigrants than citizens by birth) (Anderson, Gibney et al. 2011).¹⁴

Once the ceremony is completed, there is an acknowledgement that this transformation may take some adjusting to. For example, the host in Oakland gives advice 'to those who may be worried about leaving the building and walking around the street without a Green Card'. He assures them that they should not worry because:

When you leave here today for the first time you will be legally entitled to say: 'excuse me officer, I'm a citizen of the United States' (claps from the audience). You don't have to carry proof of US citizenship.

13 See Kaskowitz, S. (2013). *God Bless America. The Surprising History of an Iconic Song*. New York, Oxford University Press. for an account of the political history of the song 'God Bless America'.

14 On deportations and deportability, see De Genova, N. (2007). "The Production of Culprits: From Deportability to Detainability in the Aftermath of "Homeland Security"." *Citizenship Studies* 11(5): 421—448.

However, it is likely that some new citizens, particularly those from racialised groups, may be left with the anxiety that they will not be 'read' by government officials and others as US citizens. They may still need to prove their identity to police and other officials, and may still face prejudice even as American citizens (for example in the ironic labeling of the crime of 'driving while black').

Most citizens of a country have never had to go through a citizenship ceremony. This difference can leave residual doubts as to when citizens truly become citizens, in other words, as to how truly performative the ceremonies are. Or, alternatively, what kind of citizen they produce. In the Manhattan ceremony, there was a suggestion of these kinds of doubts. The judge made a fairly long speech which was, as she said, about love, although she hastily explained: 'not romantic love' (audience laughs) 'I might get into trouble for that and it's too early in the morning. But love of your country'. She goes on to acknowledge that it is a 'complicated issue', arguing that:

The country you came from you may love more than before. It is the place you go for vacation and to relax. The US is the place where your daily struggles occur and you may not necessarily be feeling much love. So how do you come to love the US?

In this account, we get the merest hint of hostility and unequal conditions that immigrants might face, with the reference to 'daily struggles'. The judge went on to explore her own history of emigration to the US as a child from Israel and how she did not find it an easy experience: 'I wasn't feeling love; I was annoyed at my parents.' She describes how, in her twenties she became fascinated in American history and the civil war and the civil rights movement. She ends her speech with:

I learned to love the US by getting to know it on a different level. I hope that if you don't feel it then you begin to feel the love – good luck to all of you and God bless America.

This speech has a double effect. On the one hand it recognizes the ties and affection that the new citizens may still have for their home countries. However, on the other it potentially suggests that they are not yet fully citizens until they can 'feel love' for the country. Thus there is a feeling that the citizenship ceremony is only the start of their transformation, rather than a celebration of the end of a process. This leaves a remaining tension about when the new citizens can feel secure in their belonging and when they will be considered by others as properly American.

Conclusion

This article has asked: What can ceremonies and their performance tell us about how the nation is being narrated and how new citizens are regarded at this moment of naturalization? The continuing importance given to oath taking and membership of the nation, alongside continuing criticism of 'illegal immigrants' and threats of

migration suggests that the post-nation and post-citizenship moment was perhaps celebrated prematurely. In the ceremonies themselves, as important as what is said, is also what is not said. This is particularly significant when thinking of how the nation and its history are told in regard to citizenship. In these ceremonies in the US, colonial settler histories, involving genocides of indigenous people and a renunciation of their rights to land and civil and political rights do not get told. Whilst the US does have a history of openness to immigration but at the same time, this has always been accompanied with highly racialised caveats to that openness and welcome. These histories are silenced in the production of a narrative of an immigrant nation in the ceremonies. This stands in contrast to the ceremonies in both Canada and Australia where at least official some mention was made of those who had inhabited the land before the settlers (Byrne 2014). The narrative of nations built on the contribution of immigrants is potentially a powerful one for giving new citizens in a nation a sense of their place in the new country. It tends to enhance a sense that the immigrants have shown resilience and can bring benefits to a country. However, this narrative can inhibit the official recognition of the more conflictual history in which exclusions based on race and national origin have also figured and where, in the contemporary period, many migrants have experienced hostility and discrimination. Accounts of openness also fail to account for the ways in which states are involved in identifying some migrants as illegal and seeking their deportation. Arms are only ever held open wide for certain categories of migrants. It may well be the case that, for some of the new citizens, their racialized positions may mean that they continue to be met with suspicion and hostility by arms of the state, or other American citizens and their membership of the nation will need to be restated and proved in many arenas of everyday life. The ceremonies in the United States fail to reflect this more complicated reality.

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Economies of Pride and Shame: Politics of Affect in New Narratives about Sweden Finns

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*This chapter examines the contemporary revisiting and reimagining of the histories and memories of Finnish migrants in Sweden. Since 2000, a new generation of children and grandchildren of the Great Migration in the 1960s and 1970s has entered the public arena in Sweden, articulating new narratives in pop music, literature, theatre and film. While these “third-generation” Sweden Finnish artists themselves embody success stories of migration, enjoying positive publicity and the appreciation of Swedish mainstream audiences, it is argued that the new narratives are essentially stories about living with, managing and rejecting shame. To be either a cultural producer or an audience of new narratives about Sweden Finns is to engage with an affective legacy of shame, a sense of history and a repertoire of representations – and politics of pride as its rejoinder. Drawing from affect theories by Sara Ahmed and Margaret Wetherell, as well as Beverley Skeggs’ work on the production of class, this chapter investigates two novels, *Svinalångorna* by Susanna Alakoski (2006) and *Ingenbarnsland* by Eija Hetekivi Olsson (2012); two television programmes, *Emigranterna* SVT (2006–2007) and *Kansankodin kuokkavieraat* YLE Teema (2011); and a musical documentary, *Ingen riktig finne/Laulu koti-ikävästä* (Mika Ronkainen 2013). In this way, the study highlights an affective practice, a pattern in process and an economy of pride and shame mobilized for purposes of identity construction and community building.*

Introduction

In October 2014, Sisuradio, the Finnish section of Swedish Public Radio (Sveriges Radio), organized a campaign week on social media around the hashtag #vågafinska – that is, #havethecouragetospeakfinnish. As a case of both media marketing and contemporary “hashtag politics” (Jeffares 2014) to create public opinion in social media, the campaign was designed to promote Finnish language use in Sweden and to empower Swedes with Finnish roots to come out and make themselves visible as members of the Sweden Finnish minority, as well as to create

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positive publicity for the minority radio channel itself. The campaign was deemed successful in terms of audience response: hundreds of listeners shared their stories on Facebook, and thousands commented on Twitter (#vågafinska 2014). The campaign was also widely acknowledged in other media, and eventually it was nominated for “Radio Event of the Year” in Sweden.

As a gesture of minority politics, the campaign was about identity and recognition rather than rights. After having long been the prime cultural marker providing unity within the Sweden Finnish community and offering a means of advancing political agendas, the Finnish language is no longer a self-evident *raison d'être* for the community. The Sweden Finnish minority is estimated to number up to 720,000 persons, about 7.2% of the population in 2016 and Finns until 2017 the largest immigrant group in Sweden (Vuonokari, Laitinen & Karlsson 2017; Rogberg 2017). However, the contours and identity of the cultural minority are fluid.¹ For a long time Finnish was the second most spoken language in Sweden, but it is currently being overtaken by Arabic (Parkvall 2015). Furthermore, Sweden Finns were established as an official minority only in 1999 when Sweden ratified the Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. And after decades of assimilationist language policies, Finnish was only recognized as one of five official language minorities in 2010.

During the past ten years, some 40 years after the peak years of the Great Migration (1969–1970) when up to 40,000 Finnish migrants were moving annually to Sweden, the children and grandchildren of that generation have started to investigate their complex identities, interrogating national legacies and the intricacies of cultural differences. In 2012, the Archive of the Sweden Finns (Sverigefinländarnas arkiv) organized the exhibition *Arvet* (“Heritage”) “about a new generation”, that is, the second- and third-generation Sweden Finns, which it claimed to be “nearly half a million” (Vuonokari 2012).

Since the turn of millennium, a number of musicians with Finnish heritage have become household names in the Swedish mainstream media: Kent, Laakso, Markoolio, Anna Järvinen, Markus Krunegård, Frida Hyvönen, Lisa Miskovsky and

1 In the postwar era, the scale of the Finnish emigration to Sweden was exceptional: with 10% of the population migrating, the phenomenon was the largest since World War II Europe in relation to the size of the population (Reinans 1996). Between 1945 and 1994, 700,000–800,000 Finns moved to Sweden for shorter or longer periods, with some moving back and forth several times and many returning to Finland. In 2008, 450,000 inhabitants in Sweden were either born in Finland, had Finnish citizenship or had at least one Finnish parent. In addition, there were 240,000 inhabitants whose grandparents were Finnish. (Korkiasaari 2000, 156; Björklund 2009.) According to recent statistics, first-, second- and third-generation Sweden Finns number up to 719,000 (Vuonokari, Laitinen & Karlsson 2017). Sweden has no official statistics of languages spoken, but in 2016, 23.2% of inhabitants were born or their both parents were born abroad. SCB 2017 “Befolkningsstatistik i sammandrag 1960–2016” <http://www.scb.se/hitta-statistik/statistik-efter-amne/befolkning/befolkningens-sammansattning/befolkningsstatistik/pong/tabell-och-diagram/helarsstatistik--riket/befolkningsstatistik-i-sammandrag/> (visited 2 June 2017). According to fresh statistics, Syrians are today the biggest foreign-born nationality group (Rogberg 2017).

Timo Räisänen came out first, followed most recently by Miriam Bryant. The feature films *Om Gud vill* (*God Willing*, Amir Chamdin 2006), *Kid svensk* (*That Special Summer*, Nanna Huolman 2000) and *Svinalängorna* (*Beyond*, Pernilla August 2010), as well as theatre performances such as Tanja Lorentzon's monologue *Mormors svarta ögon* ("Grandmother's Dark Eyes", Dramaten 2010) and Anna Takanen's direction of Lucas Svensson's epic *Fosterlandet* ("Fatherland", Gothenburg and Stockholm City Theatres 2015–2016), have investigated and interrogated the Finnish roots of second- and third-generation immigrants. Furthermore, subcultural scenes have emerged both in the Stockholm area and in Gothenburg with clubs and festivals, tango evenings (Tangopalatsi), cultural events, projects, websites and a new magazine (*Sheriffi*), all reclaiming and rehabilitating Finnish legacies. While subcultural activities are by definition marginal, Susanna Alakoski's 2006 novel *Svinalängorna* ("The Council Houses") about Finnish immigrants in south Sweden has sold almost half a million copies, and it was awarded the prestigious August prize. Its cinematic adaptation by director Pernilla August (with the English title *Beyond*) was Sweden's official candidate for the Foreign Language Oscar, and it was also nominated for the Nordic Council Film Prize, Scandinavia's largest film award. In 2012, Eija Hetekivi Olsson's novel *Ingenbarnsland* ("No Child's Land") was awarded a debut novel prize by The Swedish Writers' Union.

This is the new, heterogeneous and vibrant cultural context that the public service minority radio Sisuradio attempted to address with its #vågafinska campaign. While foregrounding empowering positivity and inviting its audience to participate in reclaiming the Finnish language, however, the campaign also mobilized memories and awareness of Finnish language as a site of shame. As such, the campaign mobilized an economy of shame and pride that echoes the familiar affective dynamic of GLTBQI movements – the alternation between a repelling of shame and a declaration of self-pride (see Fortier 2005, 565) – that, as I argue in this paper, characterizes the new narratives about Sweden Finns more generally.² Furthermore, it serves as an illustrative case of "affective citizenship" – the importance of emotions in the construction of citizenship (Johnson 2010) – and, more specifically, cultural citizenship as an affective practice.

In the following, after presenting the theoretical framework for this approach, I move on to discuss three cases of pride/shame economy: first, Sweden Finnish literary texts making claims for cultural visibility; secondly, Swedish and Finnish public service television series representing Sweden Finns for both minority and mainstream audiences; and thirdly, a recent Swedish-Finnish co-produced feature documentary reflecting upon the representational legacies. Through these three different cases, I wish to illustrate how the economy of pride and shame operates as an affective dynamic across different media and is not identifiable

² Interestingly, shame is not a topic discussed in the existing literature on Sweden Finns (Hormia 1979; Jaakkola 1984; Lainio 1996; Korkiasaari & Tarkiainen 2000; Junila & Westin 2006; Levä 2008; Tapiola 2011). The one exception is Tiina Rosenberg's essay on class, cleaning and cleanliness in Alakoski & Nielsen 2006.

with any particular media or media genre. The case studies are not chosen as representative of all Sweden Finnish cultural production, but as high-profile, widely circulated narratives about Sweden Finns that not only speak to Sweden Finns but are directed at mainstream audiences. The analysis aims to highlight the complexity of the pride/shame dynamic while demonstrating its productivity for identity and community-building purposes.

Patterns in Process: Affects as Resource

In the words of the social psychologist Margaret Wetherell, affective practice “focuses on the emotional as it appears in social life and tries to follow what participants do” (Wetherell 2012, 159). In her analysis, affective practices are “patterns in process” (ibid., 23) as “‘canonical emotional styles’ and distinctive ‘affective repertoires’ emerge in bodies, in minds, in individual lives, in relationships, in communities, across generations, and in social formations” (Wetherell 2015, 147). Drawing from her approach, I read the dynamic of pride and shame manifested in narratives about Sweden Finns as an affective practice. It is “a pattern in process” which encompasses, on the one hand, desires to destigmatize and eliminate personal and social shame, propelling a whole spectrum of demands of “liberation, legitimacy, dignity, acceptance, and assimilation, as well as the right to be different” (Halperin & Traub 2009, 3). On the other hand, it entails self-affirmation and mobilization of pride.

Traditionally, shame has been conceptualized as a negative emotion: a psychological state of suffering and anxiety to be individually or collectively worked through and liberated from. In recent critical queer theorization of shame, however, it is considered more than “a negative emotion” or a “backward feeling” (Love 2009). According to Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, “The forms taken by shame are not distinct ‘toxic’ parts of a group or individual identity that can be erased; they are instead integral to and residual in the process by which identity itself is formed” (Sedgwick 2003, 63). Highlighting the performativity of shame, its potential as a critical resource and a site of sociality, Sedgwick conceptualized shame simultaneously as a foundational, identity-forming affective experience and as a transformational, anti-identitarian energy resulting in “the work of metamorphosis, reframing, refiguration, transfiguration, affective and symbolic loading and deformation” (ibid., 13). Sedgwick’s performative theory of shame shifted the critical attention to the productivity and versatility of shame. It also reframed the affective economy of shame and pride, importantly unlocking these two from a causal chain. As a consequence, shame was redefined as not merely signalling a social trauma but as offering “a refuge, a site of solidarity and belonging”, as David Halperin and Valerie Straub argue (2009, 9). According to Michael Warner (1999, 35–36), shame invokes “a special kind of sociability” among those acknowledging

and building communities around what is most abject about themselves, and it propels “collectivities of the shamed” (Crimp 2009, 72).

Indeed, to be a cultural producer or audience of narratives about Sweden Finns, I propose, is to engage with an affective legacy of shame, a sense of history and a repertoire of representations – and politics of pride as its given rejoinder. To respond with feeling to these representations, be they literary, cinematic or theatrical, is not necessarily about identification with particular characters, storylines, themes and issues. Rather, it is about feeling the intensity of these narratives, sensing their accumulation of cultural and historical force. Affective address is understood here as the “weight of images” against the viewer (Kyrölä 2010); as a force not in spite of but because of temporal layers and citational legacies mobilized by images, the historicity of representations pulls viewers towards them, cuing anticipation, propelling narrative and interpretive desires (Koivunen 2012a). This argument of repetition as historicity draws from a reading of Judith Butler’s early work on performative acts working through “the accumulating and dissimulating historicity of force” (Butler 1993, 226–227, Koivunen 2003).

Instead of postulating shame as a core of Sweden Finnish identity – thinking about shame as a property or quality of certain selves or bodies, or even an ethnic, cultural group – I read the narratives about shame and the dynamic of pride and shame as circulation of affect, an affective economy. In calling the dynamic of pride and shame an economy, I draw from Sara Ahmed, who uses the notion of economy to conceptualize emotion as movement and circulation. In her approach, emotions “do not positively reside in a subject or figure” but “still work to bind subjects together”, working “as a form of capital” and being produced “only as an effect of its circulation” (Ahmed 2004b, 120). Hence, the notion of economy highlights the productivity and performativity of emotion: “Emotions *do things*, and they align individuals with communities – or bodily space with social space – through the very intensity of their attachments” (Ahmed 2004b, 119). Such an approach highlights the relationality of emotions and affects as well as their temporality and historicity:

Affect does not reside in an object or sign, but is an affect of the circulation between objects and signs (= the accumulation of affective value over time). Some signs, that is, increase in affective value as an effect of the movement between signs: the more they circulate, the more affective they become, and the more they appear to “contain” affect. (Ahmed 2004b, 120)

Movement as an increase or decrease of affect and value in Ahmed’s approach echoes how Beverley Skeggs in *Class, Self, Culture* (2004) theorizes the work of representation as symbolic evaluation whereby representations “attribute value to different people, practices, objects and classifications” (Skeggs 2004, 96). Analysing the attribution of value, Skeggs discusses representations as the site “where symbolic violence occurs”: where “differentiation is made between culture worth having and knowing, and culture that is not” (Skeggs 1997, 95; 2004, 96). In her work, Skeggs offers a theory of class formation, highlighting how class is “not just a

representation, nor a subject position which can be taken off a discursive shelf and worn at will or a social position which can be occupied voluntarily” (Skeggs 1997, 94). Her approach is heuristic for my reading of the narratives about Sweden Finns, which in my analysis are essentially narratives about class: invoking, articulating and negotiating classed representations and “the denigration and delegitimizing associated with their class positioning” (Skeggs 1997, 95). It also offers important insights for understanding why both old and new narratives about Sweden Finns seem caught in – but also derive their affective force from – an economy of pride and shame.

The Hidden Injury of Class: *Svinalängorna and Ingenbarnsland*

In her study of the emerging Sweden Finnish literary field of the 1970s, Marja-Liisa Pynnönen (1991, 235) describes the portrayals of immigrant reality as a combination of self-therapy and social protest: “a thoroughly experiential material” features an abundance of descriptions of “the desolate situation of the non-Swedish-speaking children in school”, of “being a maladjusted alien” and of “the feeling of being pushed aside”. Alienation, maladjustment and marginalization are concepts that Pynnönen, like many other scholars writing about Sweden Finns, use to interpret how the minority has described itself. Discussing 1970s and 1980s novels by Hannu Ylitalo and Antti Jalava in particular, Erkki Vallenius (1998, 108) writes about a “hegemony of shame” as an overarching topic in narratives of immigration.

Here the self-representation of Swedish Finns echoed imagery prevalent in mainstream Swedish media, where the trope of scandal often framed portraits of the Great Migration. Coverage of crime and social problems resulted in negative stereotypes: Swedish Finns were addressed and portrayed as disadvantaged citizens in need of social resources. The representations emphasized problems and called for reform policies. In this publicity, being a Finnish immigrant in Sweden equalled being underclass. In a headline in 1967, the Swedish tabloid *Expressen* asked, “Is it ugly to be a Finn?” Another tabloid, *Aftonbladet*, offered a telling rubric, “Work hard and keep your mouth shut. You are a fucking Finn anyway.”³

In her 1984 study of newly immigrated Sweden Finns, Magdalena Jaakkola described their condition as a “fall of ethnic status” (Jaakkola 1983, 39), referring to how Finns moving to Sweden also shift from a majority identity to a minority one. In the new context, both Finnish language and nationality became visible as a social stigma, entailing a fall of social status. Significantly, as Jaakkola points out, 7 out of 10 Sweden Finns in 1979 were working class – a ratio quite distinct from the whole population, one third, in both Finland and Sweden.

3 “Är det fult att vara finne?”, *Expressen*, 29 October, 1967; “Arbeta hårt och knip käft. Du är ändå finnjävel”, *Aftonbladet*, 5 December, 1970.

As Beverley Skeggs argues, categorizations of class are permeated by affects – fear, anxiety, and disgust – and she turns to Pierre Bourdieu to theorize how “affect and culture shape how class relations are made, known, and lived in social encounters” (Skeggs 2012, 270). In Skeggs’ reading, Bourdieu’s notion of capital is useful for conceptualizing how “people can move through social space” (Skeggs 2012, 270): “Class is shaped by access to different capitals which over time become literally embodied, that is lived as bodily dispositions” (ibid.). In her analysis, affective responses – such as shame – are symptomatic of how class is lived as a structure of feeling (Skeggs 1997, 94–95).

These affective legacies of shame are mobilized by Susanna Alakoski and Eija Hetekivi Olsson, both of whom in their debut novels write about Finnish immigrant children or youth in Sweden. Both novels are read as autobiographical and therefore as witness accounts of Sweden Finnish life, making visible a forgotten minority and claiming space for its existence in Swedish social memory. Both acquired public applause and appreciation in Sweden: Alakoski won an August prize and Hetekivi Olsson was shortlisted for it, while also winning the Swedish Radio Novel Prize and a debut novel prize by The Swedish Writers’ Union. Generally speaking, the two novels are very different: *Svinalängorna* is a portrayal of social misery, neglect and abuse in 1970s Southern Sweden; it invokes a range of genres, from naturalist novels to social problem narrative and reportage literature. *Ingenbarnsland*, on the other hand, tells the story of Miira, whose parents are tidy and orderly Finnish working-class immigrants seeking to raise their daughter in Gothenburg, on the Swedish West Coast, in Finnish-language classes. Miira’s rebellious first-person narration bears more resemblance to Monica Fagerholm’s female protagonists or 1990s Swedish girl films (Mulari 2015).

Svinalängorna and *Ingenbarnsland* underline the investments of their protagonists and first-person narrators in their Swedish communities, regularly making a spectacle of their failures in this regard. Both of the child-narrators monitor Swedish kids, make constant comparisons to themselves and articulate a sense of being a second-class citizen. Shame here is about the gaze of others. In an early scene in *Svinalängorna*, the mother and the children investigate their new home, a flat in a newly built council house, admiring the amenities of a well-equipped kitchen with a fridge, oven and many cupboards, warm water, bathroom with a bathtub and indoor toilet, balcony, and easy-care plastic mats in the living room. This enjoyment of welfare luxury is contrasted with the following scene, where the young Leena overhears her mother expressing anger at how their family is addressed by social workers as needing information about proper rules of behaviour. According to Leena’s mother, only the Finns in the neighbourhood were required to give a vow of temperance: “we were treated as second-class citizens or something, even though she had never met us before” (“vi blev ju behandlade som att vi var andra klassens människor eller något, fast hon aldrig hade sett oss förut”).

In both novels, language emerges as the prime marker of class, and also the primary site of shame. (See also Pynnönen 1991, 209–213.) The first pages

of *Svinlångorna* feature swearing as a marker of Finnishness, as well as transliterations of difficulties in the pronunciation of Swedish words (“Suttio vem okk och alv kvadrat meter. Vi har ree rum och sök och ett stort haav allteles runtomkring hornet.” Alakoski 2006, 12). Leena, the first-person narrator, collects and makes lists of Swedish words, with the lists becoming a visible sign of her simultaneous exclusion and her desire to be included. In *Ingenbarnsland*, the protagonist Miira describes her condition as being imprisoned in a *finneballebubblan*, or “minority bubble” (Hetekivi Olsson 2012, 197). Attending classes taught in Finnish, an opportunity given by the Swedish school system as a gesture of recognizing minority languages amidst assimilationist immigration policies, Miira experiences being downgraded and doomed to become a second-class citizen, even a cleaning lady (“Sirkka Städarelainen”); she asks how she could ever study to become a brain surgeon, given that she will not even learn the names of brain parts in Swedish.

While readable as “authentic” claims for cultural visibility (see Skeggs 2004, 105–107) and hence as involved in pride politics through self-affirmation and a demand for recognition, both novels are essentially narratives about the pain of shame. As Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick and Adam Frank (2003, 116) write in their evocation of Silvan Tomkins’ affect theory, shame as an emotion is always linked to a positive expectation: “only a scene that offers you enjoyment or engages your interest can make you blush”. This, indeed, is the affective economy of Sweden Finns as a collectivity of the shamed. Both Leena and Miira aspire to belong and pass as Swedes, but are painfully shamed by their failure or exclusion. Through the eyes of others they internalize the shaming gaze of others, directing it not only at themselves (most explicitly, Miira in *Ingenbarnsland*) but also at their parents (especially Leena in *Svinlångorna*). At the same time, as Sara Ahmed (2004a, 107) argues, shame is intimately related to interest and love and, hence, the formation of communities: “Shame binds us to others in how we are affected by our failure to ‘live up’ those others, a failure that must be witnessed.” She concludes that “shame both confirms and negates the love that sticks us together” (Ahmed 2004a, 107). For the Swedish audience, these novels may read as social critique or shaming narratives of the failures of the *folkhem*, the Swedish welfare state, in integrating migrants or managing class differences beyond Sweden Finns. For Sweden Finns, the narratives may read as a painful repetition of individual and collective experiences of shame, but also as signals of efforts to recuperate shame and seek recognition. In any case, shame builds communities.

Representing Minority, Attributing Value: Public Service TV in Sweden and Finland

The recent radio campaign #vågafinska is but one instance in a series of programmes by Swedish public service television and radio encouraging Sweden Finns to discover and investigate their Finnish legacies, sometimes ironically

and tongue-in-cheek, sometimes in a more didactic manner. Unearthing hidden Finnishness, reclaiming it as an asset and an interesting life story, is what many of the recent Sweden Finnish TV series (*Juuret/Rötter* 1–7, 2012; *Love i Finland* 1–5, 2015; *Finnomani* 1–6, 2016) are suggesting.

While negative stereotypical images of Finnish immigrants as male, uneducated and alcoholic still circulate in the public sphere, in public television minority media (Tapiola 2011; Lainio 1996, 416–418; Korkiasaari 2000, 328–331) Sweden Finns are most often addressed and portrayed as resourceful, mobile citizens.⁴ Symptomatic of this approach is the documentary series *Emigranterna* (“Emigrants” 1–11, SVT 2006–2007), in which portraits of Finns moving to Sweden intertwine with stories of Swedes moving to Finland, all of them being presented as a pool of migration stories. Already in its title, *Emigranterna* distinguishes itself from the figure of the immigrant. While “immigration” connotes migration as movement out of necessity, “emigration” here stresses mobility as a self-made choice.⁵ “Emigrants” are adventurous, self-enterprising and resourceful persons who make active choices – in contrast to “immigrants”, who are, by implication, framed by discourses of necessity, disadvantage and victimhood. In the words of SVT promotional publicity:

Emigrants are courageous people who want changes in their lives. Before moving they sell their houses and furniture, give up flats and jobs, and orient themselves towards the new life with adventurous minds. Family and friends, or at least many memories, are left in the past home country – in the new one awaits the unknown. Be the mover a Finn or a Swede, migration is always a confusing experience. The bureaucratic labyrinths, trials with language skills and the loneliness awaiting an emigrant will eventually turn into a victory. Or is this the case?⁶

In *Emigranterna*, we meet Marjo Kulojärvi and Jari Tenhunen, who leave their newly built house in Haukipudas when Jari is offered an engineering job in Stockholm, and Laura Tuominen and Markus Ala, two information technology professionals and a thirtysomething couple from Tampere who move to their company's Stockholm office. On the other hand, the series features Daniel Svensson, who has dual citizenship and is seeking a military career in Finland, aspiring for A-class status as a soldier; Anne and Markku Kotisalo, who have worked for Nokia and the banking sector in Stockholm and are now returning to Finland because of their son; and Miriam Olsson, who moves from Gothenburg to the Turku archipelago

4 Committed to promoting Swedish language and constructing an impartial platform for the formation of public opinion, SVT is simultaneously obliged by its remit to prioritize “taking into consideration the interests of linguistic and ethnic minorities”. In this manner, public service television in Sweden has a dual agenda: to appeal to the broad public and gain popular legitimacy and, at the same time, to provide a frame and means for minority activism. (Camauër 2003.)

5 For a discussion of the concepts of migration and mobility, see Habti & Koikkalainen 2014, 7.

6 Presentation of *Emigrantit/Emigranterna*. SVT 21 April 2006. <svt.se/2.39159/1.577830/> (visited 22 February 2011, not available online anymore). (This and other translations from Swedish and Finnish by the author.)

to learn Finnish and experience small island village life. Importantly, the series depicts Swedish Finns and indigenous Swedes as symmetrically positioned. It calls forth identification by mirroring the migration between the two countries. Here the historical class difference is downplayed and replaced by a rhetoric of cultural difference and emphasis on language skills.

The framing of Sweden Finns and migrants in general as “courageous” agents of their own lives is enhanced by the use of video diaries, in which the protagonists “reveal” the truth about their experiences of migration. These video diaries frame the representatives of the category of “emigrants” as narrators and subjects of their own lives, as having a voice of their own and as being able to control it. Shame, by implication, is redistributed to those unnamed bodies not living up to this ideal of mobile life, who do not empower themselves (Ouellette & Hay 2008, 3, 15), but perhaps, through silence, also to those past generations of migrants who supposedly acted out of necessity and not out of free will.

Kansankodin kuokkavieraat (“The Gate-crashers in the Folkhem” 1–8, YLE Teema 2011), a Finnish documentary series about Sweden Finns, has a very different rhetoric than *Emigranterna*. In its very title, it addresses migrants as “gate-crashers” and, hence, as uninvited guests or intruders. Furthermore, it opens by remembering and documenting the poverty of 1960s Finland, citing footage from a 1969 TV documentary about Finnish migrants. With this footage and witness statements, the series frames the mass migration as an issue of necessity, depicting Finland during that period in terms of poverty, hunger, unemployment, housing issues and deficient infrastructure:

Half a million Finns in the prime years, 10 percent of the population, left for Sweden, hoping for a better life. Sweden needed a larger workforce and offered a better standard of living than Finland, which was still recovering from the war. This documentary series tells about Finnish immigrants in Sweden, about adaptation, tolerance and longing for the home country.⁷

The series tells the narrative of migration as originating in trauma and resulting in traumatic experiences, but also as a story of survival: “For many families of the 1970s it was a tremendous change of life to move to Sweden to seek employment. A little shack and a life full of hardships were exchanged for a three-room flat and industrial work.”⁸ As a consequence, the affective economy of this series is very different from that of *Emigranterna*. On the one hand, through individual life stories and private testimonies the series makes visible the history of the Sweden Finns and the mass migration, which for decades has received surprisingly little serious attention in the Finnish public sphere. As such, the series is engaged in identity politics and revision of history books. On the other hand, Sweden Finns are

7 Voice-over introduction to the series, repeated in the beginning of every episode.

8 Voice-over introduction to the series.

invoked for the sake of contemporary political discussions on immigration. Here the affective logic at work is not of a parade of pride, but explicit shaming.

As politics of affect, *Kansankodin kuokkavieraat* performs a double shaming gesture. First and foremost, it attempts to provoke the mainstream Finnish audience – its intended viewers – by redistributing shame to both past and present Finland. In the first episode of the series, many interviewees and first-person narrators use the expression “the fatherland could not take care of its children”, implying that Finland as a state failed its citizens. Even more explicit is the shaming of the contemporary audience: “Shame on you who have denied or forgotten your past!” The intention underlying the series is openly therapeutic: “By dealing with our memories and experiences about a strange country we may be enabled to understand what it feels like to be an immigrant.” The producers hope to promote “health” through shaming therapy.

However, in shaming the nation for its past and present policies, the documentary series also ends up shaming the Sweden Finnish minority – or at least re-ascribing to the migrants the 1960s–1980s Swedish mainstream representations of migrants as social problems. For the Swedish Finn audience, the series is promoted on the Sisuradio home page with a provocative question: “Are Finns who have moved to Sweden economic refugees, immigrants or social bums?”⁹ This formulation by Sweden Finns within their own minority culture would be unthinkable were it expressed by the Swedish majority.

The two documentary series testify to the on-going battle over the meanings of “Sweden Finn”. While addressing their viewers very differently and invoking very different images of the migrant, they nevertheless share the pride/shame dynamic. In *Emigranterna*, the traumas and stigmas of the past are deemphasized for the purpose of contemporary pride narratives, whereas in *Kansankodin kuokkavieraat* the traumas and the legacies of shame are foregrounded.

Rewriting the Past: *Laulu koti-ikävästä*

In 2013, Mika Ronkainen’s third feature documentary, *Laulu koti-ikävästä* (*Ingen riktig finne/Finnish Blood, Swedish Heart*) was released for theatrical distribution both in Finland and Sweden and received positive publicity for voicing memories and feelings of being a Finnish immigrant in Sweden. The film tells the story of Kai Latvalehto, a former Finnish rock musician, who lives in Oulu in Northern Finland and – in the grips of a mid-life crisis, turning forty – embarks with his father on a road trip to his childhood region in southwestern Sweden. As a film about Sweden Finns, albeit repatriated ones, *Laulu koti-ikävästä* is highly conscious of the narrative and affective legacies it builds upon and engages with. In this documentary, the

9 “Suomalaisarja pureutuu ruotsinsuomalaisuuteen”. Sisuradio 17 February 2011. <sverigesradio.se/sida/artikel.aspx?programid=185&artikel=4354422> (visited 2 June 2017).

historical and social facts of fleeing poverty and unemployment in Finland, as well as the child's memories of living in a Finnish immigrant community and being underclass in the eyes of the new homeland, are articulated in and reframed as a feel-good film, a musical documentary and a road movie.

In a Swedish context and for Swedish audiences, the documentary enables a revisiting – both for the mainstream public and for the Swedish Finnish minority – of past negative stereotypes of Swedish Finns, which prevailed in the press during the Great Migration, as disadvantaged citizens in need of social resources. In a Finnish context, the film breaks the stubborn silence on the mass migration which has persisted in the national public sphere. It also rearranges the affective economy dynamic that structures the existing narratives about Swedish Finns with shame as a defining feature. In its narrative, *Laulu koti-ikävästä* stages the visiting of a past trauma as a cure for present unhappiness. While featuring male tears – a popular trope in Finnish culture (Koivunen 2012b) – and inviting viewers into a cathartic viewing experience, the narration distances itself in many ways when processing the legacy of shame.

First, the shame of being an underclass immigrant is displaced into the past and onto a character who in the present is a relatively successful Finn. In fact, this is the structuring joke of the film: the main character is a Finn who longs for Sweden. This is something which is difficult to accommodate in any contemporary narratives about Finland, where hating the obligatory teaching of Swedish language at school is a popular pastime. Kai Latvalehto is neither a Finn nor a Swede, and his memories of childhood hark back to times and places that are excluded from the commonplace Finnish national narrative, as the official histories of Finland seldom highlight the many waves of emigration. Nevertheless, Kai is culturally fluent in both countries, unlike his father who never learnt Swedish and who in the film appears as a kind of happy-go-lucky trickster figure, never seeming to suffer from stigma or shame, but who also finally makes confessions that alter the family history and drastically reframe the narrative of becoming an immigrant. While the father's past is initially cast as a regular story of immigration, fleeing unemployment and seeking a higher standard of living, he discloses that embezzling money from a shop he ran was the motivation for his departure for Sweden. Thus, during their road trip both Kai and his father revisit their respective pasts, which are not the same.

During the road trip, the son returns to places from his childhood, addressing and processing his sense of contemporary non-belonging by embracing his forgotten past. He makes peace and bonds with his father, also learning the real reasons for his family's migration. As a road movie, the generic narrative trajectory is played out and the trip fulfils its task: the son's identity crisis is resolved, the patrilinear relationship is mended and Kai can go on with his life, being a good father to his own son.

Beyond this individual narrative, the film performs collective redistribution and reworking of shame. A key strategy in this regard is the narrative structure of revisiting key sites and landscapes, not only of Kai and his father's past but

those of the Great Migration. Among such *lieux de mémoire* are Slussen, the traffic hub in Stockholm and a notorious scene of Finnish crime and social misery; the landscape of “Million Programme”, the public housing programme of the 1960s and 1970s, which resulted in large suburbs surrounding Stockholm; and scenes of minor industries and roads connecting Stockholm, Eskilstuna and Gothenburg, major areas of Finnish immigration. A second, intertwined strategy is the addition of musical performances staged at these sites.

In the film’s music numbers – released also as a soundtrack – the new generation of Sweden Finnish pop stars revisits the generation of the Great Migration (i.e. that of their parents and grandparents) by performing cover versions of songs produced in 1974 as *Siirtolaisen tie* (“The Migrant’s Way”, Love Records). Shame is redistributed, as the new generation which has the cultural and social capital to perform this gesture inhabits the past landscapes of pain and shame, thereby “converting cultural resources into symbolic capital” (Skeggs 2004, 96). In the imaginary world invoked by music, the perspectives of the past and present intersect and overlap. Anna Järvinen, one of the most well known of the second-generation Swedish pop musicians and singer-songwriters, performs in her signature eerie style the lyrics of Arvo Salo longing for the Finnish language and homeland: “Suomi se on ollut minun äitieni kieli, ja Suomi se on ollut minun maani. Ei voi väittää, ettei sinne vieläkin tee mieli, ja ettei vielä ikäväkin vaali.” (“Finnish was the language of my mothers, and Finland was my country. There is no denying that I still hark back there, and yearning burns my mind.”) Here she writes herself and her generation into the history and narrative of the earlier generation.

While the music in this film may appear enigmatic and detached to some viewers, to those with migrant memories these scenes are textually and affectively thick moments, addressing the viewers both haptically (Marks 2000) and intellectually as readable, multi-layered texts about the actual histories of Sweden Finns. These scenes play a key role in creating a multi-language space for different migrant generations, emotional histories, temporalities and social positions. Furthermore, in and through music numbers there emerges “an empire of Sweden Finns” as an intimate public, in line with Lauren Berlant’s (2008, viii) idea of “a community of feeling” founded not on the mode of confessional speech but shared social memory and mutual recognition. The second- and third-generation Sweden Finns seem to be saying to their parents and grandparents: “You existed. We see you. You see us. We know and will not forget.”

While mobilizing the affective legacies of shame – returning to the iconic sites of Sweden Finnish working-class life and revisiting the songs of the 1970s – the film also mobilizes shame to build an imaginary community of Sweden Finns across generations with second- and third-generation Sweden Finns sharing the histories of the Great Migration. In the montage of the film, the Sweden Finns of the past and those of today are edited into a sequence, emerging as a community that shares a common history. If not all have personal injuries or wounds, in any case they share the gaze of others, the experience of being read by others as a “Sweden

Finn". In this imaginary, utopian world of togetherness, belonging and authenticity – to cite the characteristics that Richard Dyer (1977) ascribes to musicals as a genre of utopia – politics in the sense of societal structures, fighting injustices and discrimination and claiming rights are momentarily put aside.

Another important accent is introduced by Darya Pakarinen, a tango star who sings about Finnish children as having equally blue eyes as Swedish ones ("Suomen lapsi on yhtä kultahapsi, ja yhtä sinisilmäinen kuin Ruotsin lapsi on"). In her performance, Pakarinen makes visible the context of Finnish immigration. While existing narratives of Finnish immigration to Sweden tend to treat it as an isolated phenomenon and part of a national narrative – namely, Finns fleeing the unemployment and poverty of their home country to Sweden – Pakarinen, the daughter of a Finnish mother and Iranian father, embodies and makes visible the transnational context of immigration: Finns participating together with other immigrants in the labour force during the economic growth and expanding industrialization of Sweden.

As a narrative about Sweden Finns, *Laulu koti-ikävästä* mobilizes a range of genres and modes of narration: autoethnographic documentary, historical documentary, male melodrama, road movie and musical. The film's attempt to speak to both mainstream and minority audiences in both Finland and Sweden adds to the complexity of its address and its politics of affect.

Conclusion

While rooted in social histories of the mass migration in the 1960s and 1970s, the centrality of shame in narratives about Sweden Finns is not reducible to an index of social and historical trauma. Beyond a negative emotion or a toxic part of identity, shame – and its rejoinder, pride – operates as a pattern in process, structuring identity construction and community building. Shame signals an affective practice engendering cultural citizenship; making visible and invoking for many viewers deeply felt, painful memories of an injurious past, narratives of shame also serve as a cultural resource, an entrance ticket to a wider market of identity narratives and pride politics in the public sphere.

While not proposed as a distinctive Sweden Finnish structure of feeling, the dynamic of pride and shame permeates the new narratives about Sweden Finns. The novels, television programmes and the feature documentary discussed in this chapter demonstrate how the pride/shame dynamic operates as an economy in the sense of emotions circulating, enforcing one another and adding to the affective value through repetition in time. In the case of *Svinalångorna* and *Ingenbarnsland*, the first-person narrators articulate experiences of being shamed and incorporating shame into one's identity. At the same time, the novels have been read as politics of pride and visibility by appreciating Swedish audiences. The two public service television series *Emigranterna* and *Kansankodin kuokkavieraat* highlight how

media institutions articulate citizenship as affective practice and how economies of pride and shame propel national narratives. While *Emigranterna*, as a narrative of mobility, reads as an attempt to inscribe added value to migrating bodies and selves, *Kansankodin kuokkavieraat* reinscribes valuable contemporary selves onto the injurious past, framing the trope of Sweden Finns with legacies of poverty and social disadvantage. Politics of visibility as an affirmative strategy thus operate both with empowerment and shaming. *Laulu koti-ikävästä* features confessional, “authentic” Sweden Finnish voices who testify to past injury, embodying shame, but the film offers a reparative, therapeutic trip: an imaginary return to the past that resolves generational conflicts, resulting in a healing union.

In these cases, the economy of pride and shame is intimately linked with class histories. Narratives about Sweden Finns read as stories about the pain of being an outsider and an underdog, illiterate and ineloquent in Swedish, even when they are produced by younger generations who themselves embody success stories of immigration. Following the affective dynamic, they are also stories about overcoming social stigmas and traumatic migrant histories and about coming to terms with the past. Indeed, as Beverley Skeggs argues, identities are not to be seen as “reflections of objective class positions” or as “essential categories”, but as “continually in the process of being reproduced as responses to social positions, through access to representational systems and in the conversion of forms of capital” (Skeggs 1997, 94).

Laulu koti-ikävästä indicates how the economy of pride and shame entails both repetition and symbolic re-evaluation. Sharing the history of representations and its symbolic violence with their parents and grandparents who emigrated to Sweden, the second- and third-generation Sweden Finns have access to what Beverley Skeggs calls “conversion mechanisms”. Unlike the older generations, they possess cultural and social resources which enable a resignification of classed histories and a re-evaluation of Sweden Finnishness as symbolic capital. Paradoxically, therefore, shame may operate simultaneously as a stigma and as an identity resource for the new Sweden Finnish self.

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Welcome to Finnish Literature!

Hassan Blasim and the Politics of Belonging

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The article discusses Hassan Blasim's precarious position in the Finnish literary field. Blasim is an Iraqi-born author who came as a refugee to Finland in 2004. Since then, he has become an internationally acclaimed author whose short stories, written in Arabic, have been translated into more than 20 languages, including Finnish. However, his inclusion in the Finnish literary field is questionable: while he has gained increasing recognition in the form of awards and grants, he cannot join, due to the original language of his work, either the national writers' union for Finnish speakers or its Swedish-language counterpart. Blasim's status as an immigrant makes him a stranger in Finland, part insider and part outsider. The article elaborates on the sociological concept of "stranger", as explicated by Georg Simmel, in reference to writers like Blasim. It also examines the media reception of Blasim and his books in Finland. The analysed material consists of journalistic texts on Blasim as well as his books published in Finnish newspapers and magazines from 2009 to 2014, from the first articles about him in the Finnish media to the news of him receiving the Independent Foreign Fiction Prize.

Hassan Blasim is an Iraqi-born author who came as a refugee to Finland in 2004. Two collections of his short stories, written in Arabic, are available in translation for Finnish readers. However, his inclusion in the Finnish literary field is questionable: on one hand, his books are discussed by the Finnish media and he is receiving increasing recognition;¹ but on the other hand, due to the original language of his

1 Blasim is mentioned in the latest general reference book of contemporary literature in Finland (*Suomen nykykirjallisuus I–II*, 2013) as an example of writers with immigrant backgrounds living and working in the country. He also gets attention from researchers who consider him part of the literary field in Finland. The Finnish Literary Society is going to make an "author interview" with him, which will be recorded and stored in the literary archives for the use of scholars. He has received various grants and awards in Finland. At European Literature Night in London in 2015, Blasim was even announced by one of the financiers of the event as representing Finland (<http://www.finnish-institute.org.uk/en/articles/1451-european-literature-night-vii-brings-the-continents-top-writers-to-london>). Moreover, Blasim takes active part in discussions about literature, as well as politics, in Finland. In May 2015, for instance, he was invited to the Helsinki Lit event to read from his book, but instead he gave a powerful talk that criticized the way in which writers with immigrant backgrounds are treated in Finland. Broadcast live on television, this speech created further discussion in the media.

work, he cannot join, for example, either the national writers' union for Finnish speakers or the one for Swedish speakers only (see Korhonen & Paqvalén 2016, 19–20). Overall, it can be argued that it is his status as an immigrant that makes him a stranger in Finland, part insider and part outsider. The article discusses Blasim's precarious position in the Finnish literary field.

Blasim's work is essentially transnational. His first publishing channel was the Internet, and his readers are scattered all around the Arabic-speaking world. Blasim's writing circulates around the globe not only in the original Arabic but also in translations. Two collections of his short stories that appeared first in English translations, *The Madman of Freedom Square* (2009) and *The Iraqi Christ* (2013), have been translated extensively into other languages, and an American edition of his work, *The Corpse Exhibition*, was published by Penguin (USA) in 2014. A publisher in Italy released the first uncensored collection of Blasim's short stories in Arabic in 2015 in book form (Al-Nawas 2017).

The themes of Blasim's stories seem to find appeal among readers all around the world. Even though his style is often characterised in terms of such genres as magical realism and absurdism, his stories invariably address real, tangible subjects. Most of the stories are set in the past decades of Iraq's history: the war with Iran, the aftermath of the Gulf War, the horrors following the most recent U.S. invasion and the Iraqi exile. However, they are not so much stories about war but stories about how war permeates the minds of the people involved in it. The characters in his stories are dislocated and existentially lost. One of his central themes involves the difficulties of processing the trauma caused by war.

Although the reception of Blasim's texts has internationally been laudatory – he was described by the *Guardian* as “perhaps the greatest writer of Arabic fiction alive” (Yassin-Kassab 2010) – he has been relatively unknown in Finland. However, after he won the esteemed Independent Foreign Fiction Prize in the UK in 2014, several articles and news stories were also written about him in Finnish media. The Finland Award, granted to Blasim by the Ministry of Education and Culture in 2015, can be seen as a breakthrough into Finland's cultural scene, although his visibility outside of it should not be overestimated.

Despite his success, Blasim remains an immigrant, a status that inevitably also affects his position in the literary field of Finland. In the case of Blasim, *the politics of belonging*,² mentioned in the title of this article, is multi-layered and mutable. Prior to 2016, his not belonging to the nation of Finland was signified by the fact that he had been denied citizenship due to failing the required language test. Now, as the holder of a Finnish passport, he is able to travel much more easily than with the so-called “alien's passport” he used to have before. However, the question of his belonging to the literary field in Finland is still a matter of debate. The language

2 The use of the concept “politics of belonging” in this article is influenced by the work of Nira Yuval-Davis (2011), as she has pointed out how politics of belonging include struggles around the determination of what is involved in belonging, in being a member of a community. (See also Lähdesjärvi et al. 2016.)

he uses for writing is perhaps the most important thing that defines and restricts his inclusion.

In order to understand Blasim's public image in Finland, it is necessary to develop a wider conception of how immigrants are represented in the national mediascape. According to research conducted on the Finnish media, the portrayal of immigrants and other minorities often implies a certain kind of understanding about Finnish culture and people in which the country and its inhabitants are seen as homogeneous and monolingual. The embodied multiculturalisation of immigrants in Finland results in a persistent drawing of boundaries between Finnishness and strangeness (e.g. Horsti 2005; Rossi 2011; Haavisto 2011). In her research on the media's role in positioning minorities in Finland, Camilla Haavisto stresses the importance of accepting Finnishness as a flexible category (Haavisto 2011, 203). The need for reconsidering Finnish literature – or rather, literature in Finland – as a flexible category is equally justified.

In this article, I will first discuss the sociological concept of “stranger”, as enunciated by Georg Simmel, in reference to writers like Blasim. Secondly, I will examine the media reception of Blasim and his books in Finland. The analysed material consists of journalistic texts on Blasim and his books published in Finnish newspapers and magazines in 2009–2014, from the first articles about him in the Finnish media to the news of him receiving the Independent Foreign Fiction Prize, and it includes book reviews, columns, interviews and articles. The variety of the analysed texts provides a comprehensive overview of the printed media covering literature and literary culture in Finland.³

Out of Place

In the photograph (see p. 70), Hassan Blasim is standing on a frozen lake close to Tampere, Finland, where he lived at the time. The picture was published in a 3-page interview in Finland's biggest newspaper, *Helsingin Sanomat*, in the middle of March 2014 (Zidan 2014). Translated into English, the headline of the story runs: “Literary sensation from Pispala.”⁴ However, the headline and the man in the picture may raise questions. For example, how exactly is he *from* Pispala?

Pispala is a residential area in Tampere, known for its homey wooden houses built topsy-turvy on a narrow ridge between two lakes; that is the view Blasim is facing while he is posing for the photograph. But is Blasim not clearly an immigrant, a refugee from Iraq, who writes in Arabic? What does Pispala have to do with Arabic literature?

3 The analysed media texts comprise 16 articles (including interviews and news stories), 13 critiques (of which two were published in three regional newspapers and one in four regional newspapers), and one column. The articles were mostly published in daily newspapers, but some appeared in weekly magazines and other publications.

4 “Kirjallinen sensaatio Pispalasta.”

HS

HELSINGIN SANOMAT LAUANTAINA 15. MAALISKUUTA 2014

KULTTUURI

C MIELIPIDE • TÄNÄÄN



Kirjallinen sensaatio Pispalasta

Brittilehti kutsuu Hassan Blasimia
"ehkä parhaaksi elossa olevaksi
arabialaiskirjailijaksi". Irakista
paennut Blasim asuu Tampereella
eikä kaipaakaan sieltä minnekään.

"Literary sensation from Pispala" (Zidan 2014, C1).

For Finns, there is nothing particularly strange in connecting Pispala with literature. The national canon of Finnish literature includes several esteemed authors identified as coming from Pispala; these are writers who were born and lived there, and who also use Pispala as a setting in their stories. However, Pispala is not just any kind of milieu for a narrative, since it has working class written all over it, so to speak. Pispala is famous not only as a picturesque neighbourhood, which nowadays attracts both artists and people of means, but also because of its history as a community founded by the factory workers of Tampere. Accordingly, the place has a strong symbolic meaning. The last battle of the Finnish Civil War in the Tampere area took place at the top of Pispala ridge in the year 1918; it is the very place where the Reds – consisting mainly of industrial and agrarian workers – lost the war.⁵

Thus, presenting Hassan Blasim as being from Pispala is, in the parlance of cultural studies, a fascinating *articulation*. This particular association of two seemingly mismatching things, an Arab author in the Finnish literary landscape, inspires thought about several concepts that are often discussed in studies focusing on transnationalism, such as place and belonging, mobility of identities, and migration (e.g. Pollari et al. 2015). In addition, from the point of view of literary studies, Blasim's case evokes questions concerning the multilingualism of the national literary field as well as the formation of the literary canon in Finland.

Even though the article in *Helsingin Sanomat* accentuates how after a long and tiresome journey as a refugee Blasim has finally found a place of his own in Pispala, as a writer he seems to be in some ways dislocated. According to Pascale Casanova, “the study of literature almost everywhere in the world is organized along national lines”, and this is “a result of the appropriation of literatures and literature histories by political nations during the nineteenth century” (Casanova 2007, xi). However, in the history of literature, being geographically or linguistically “out of place” is not at all an unusual position – quite the contrary. The list of writers in exile or writers who have voluntarily emigrated from their country of origin is long and contains many distinguished writers, from Joseph Conrad to W. G. Sebald, from V. S. Naipaul to Salman Rushdie. Nevertheless, this kind of transnational mobility, which is so visible in “world literature”, is not necessarily perceived by national literary histories that often fail to identify authors who function in two or more countries or write in two or more languages (Pollari et al. 2015, 6). The latest reference book on contemporary literature in Finland, published in two volumes in 2013, does include a chapter on the profession of authors “getting more international”⁶ while focusing on writers that have moved to Finland from abroad (Nissilä & Rantonen 2013). All in all, however, literature has had such strong significance in imagining the Finnish

5 Societal and political tensions leading to the Finnish Civil War are depicted in several novels set in Pispala, such as F. E. Sillanpää's *Hiltu ja Ragnar* (1923) and Lauri Viita's *Moreeni* (1950).

6 In the original, “kansainvälistyvä kirjailijakunta”.

nation that the literary field would seem to reject strangers like Blasim. He sticks out like a naked bulrush on a frozen lake.

The dilemma of placing writers like Blasim in the national atlas of literature is reflected in the process of classifying, categorising and labelling them. In the Nordic countries, one of the terms most commonly used and discussed by both critics and scholars has been “immigrant author” (e.g. Kongslien 2007; Gebauer & Schwartz Lausten 2010; Behschnitt & Nilsson 2013). However, the problems implied by the concept are widely known (Löytty 2015). Discussing literature written by writers with an immigrant background in Sweden, Magnus Nilsson writes that “[t]his construction of the category of ‘immigrant literature’ limits the representational scope of this literature, and produces othering and exoticizing representations of non-Swedish ethnicities” (Nilsson 2010, 1).

In her pioneering study on “transnational literature” in Finland, Hanna-Leena Nissilä highlights the significance of concepts as methodological instruments directing the orientation of the research (Nissilä 2016, 51). Choosing the conceptual framework and additional terminology has certain consequences for the direction of the analysis. For example, concepts like “immigrant literature” – or “refugee literature”, another term used in regard to writers like Blasim – draw attention to only one possible interpretational frame at a time. Blasim is certainly a refugee and an immigrant in Finland, but describing him as a refugee or immigrant writer narrows his writer’s identity as well as the scope of interpretations made of his texts. (Löytty 2015.) However, as Nissilä argues, the choice of concepts depends on the research question; the background or the transnational mobility of the given author may very well be of importance (Nissilä 2016, 51–52).

Stranger – Partly in, Partly out

Despite his being a stranger in the literary field of Finland, Blasim is certainly not a complete outsider or alien with no recognizable features: as German sociologist Georg Simmel (1971/1908) pointed out, the figure of a stranger is always a product of a negotiation between the familiar and the alien. In the beginning of the 20th century, Simmel wrote that the stranger may be a member of a group in a spatial sense, but not in a social sense; s/he may be among us but not one of us. In other words, a stranger is located in an area where the circles of the familiar and the alien overlap. However, that person is familiar enough to be identified and categorized as a stranger. In the words of Sara Ahmed, “we recognize somebody as a stranger, rather than simply failing to recognize them” (2000, 21). Therefore, “the inhabitants of Sirius are not exactly strangers to us”, as Simmel writes, “they are beyond being far and near” (1971/1908, 143–144). In short, strangership is an element of the group itself.

Simmelian sociology understands strangership as a social position (Huttunen 2002, 331) rather than as a feature of an individual, and as a position it is always

relational and contextual. Indeed, there are different degrees to being a stranger, and in this respect the concept differs from another commonly applied term that is used in reference to difference and alterity, namely “otherness”. As a concept, “other” directs analysis to a pattern of binary logic (either/or) (Hall 1997), whereas the position of being a stranger undermines this binarism, taking into account that it is possible to simultaneously be both an insider and outsider or a member and non-member; thus, the question of belonging is not reduced to choosing just one mutually exclusive option.

In her study on positioning practices of minorities in Finland, *Conditionally One of ‘Us’*, Camilla Haavisto analyses the discursive organization of difference in print media. According to her, “when minority actors have visibility and voice, their similarity and close relation to ‘us’ seem to be emphasised, and when they lack visibility and voice, the more their differences and lack of relationships to ‘us’ are underlined.” She illustrates the intensity of strangership by drawing continua on which, for example, “visibility and voice go from visible and loud to invisible and silent.” (Haavisto 2011, 190–191.)

This means that belonging can be thought of as a *process of integration*. It is indeed possible to be “conditionally one of ‘us’” or relatively integrated, to belong partly, to have two or more loyalties, to identify with several places simultaneously, or to have one’s heart partly here and partly elsewhere. Thus, in the same way as the concept of strangership implies the relativity of otherness, the process of integration implies the relativity of belonging.

However, it must be kept in mind that in a world that follows the national order, simultaneous belonging and not belonging can, of course, be very disconcerting and disturbing. In his essay on the social construction of ambivalence, Zygmunt Bauman (2007, 61) writes that the enforcement of any classifications inevitably means the production of anomalies. By anomaly, he refers to “phenomena which are perceived as ‘anomalous’ only as far as they span the categories whose staying apart is the meaning of order”. Bauman discusses the Simmelian concept of stranger and states: “There is hardly an anomaly more anomalous than the stranger. He stands *between* friend and enemy, order and chaos, the inside and the outside.” (Ibid., italics in original.)

Nonetheless, as the articulation that made Blasim a Finnish writer or a writer from Pispala indicates, writers in exile do not exist outside the national fields of literature or in a no-man’s land (Pollari et al. 2015, 8–13). Instead, they are often – always, sometimes, necessarily, most likely? – connected to more than one regional context, and therefore they become personifications of ambivalence.

One of Blasim’s short stories, *The Nightmares of Carlos Fuentes* (2009), illustrates in a forceful way what happens if the “stranger” attempts to assimilate all the way. When an Iraqi refugee by the name of Salim Abdul Husein arrives in the Netherlands, he changes his name to Carlos Fuentes, “a brown name” that suits the complexion of his skin but does not reveal his Iraqi origin. Carlos soon learns Dutch, marries a Dutch woman, enrolls in “numerous courses on Dutch culture

and history”, and consequently obtains Dutch citizenship. The metamorphosis is so complete that “Fuentes felt his skin and blood has changed for ever and that his lungs were now breathing real life.”

Despite his systematic efforts, however, Carlos is not able to get rid of his original self. He begins to have nightmares of his true identity being disclosed and ridiculed. At the end of the story, he has a dream where he meets Salim Abdul Husain, who is laughing at Carlos’ changed identity. In the nightmare, Carlos shoots Salim, while in reality Carlos Fuentes is found dead on the pavement, and the newspapers report about “an Iraqi man” – not a Dutch national – who committed suicide by jumping from the sixth floor window. (Blasim 2009, 77–84.)

The significance of language is emphasized in the short story. In one of his nightmares, Carlos is standing in the courtroom, accused of planting a car bomb in the centre of Amsterdam, but the judges forbid him from speaking Dutch, “with the intent to humiliate and degrade him”. The “agony and distress” are ratcheted up when the Iraqi translator tells him not to speak “in his incomprehensible rustic accent”. (Ibid., 81.)

Among other things, *The Nightmares of Carlos Fuentes* demonstrates the difficulties inherent in the position of a stranger. While Blasim has not by any means pursued the status of a “Finnish writer”, the question of his place is raised as soon as he steps into the literary field, which is organized so often along national lines as well as congruent linguistic lines.

This ambivalence is also implied in the categorising of Blasim as a transnational writer. The prefix ‘trans-’ refers to border crossings, and it signifies the obvious fact that Blasim cannot be located in one place only. The term also contains the stem ‘natio’, which indicates the significance of the national order in the prevailing worldview in general and in the definitions of literature in particular. Despite the recent, inexorable trajectories of globalization, depending of course on the specific research question, nations may still be meaningful units of analysis, even in the case of writers in exile. Even if it would sound somewhat peculiar to call Blasim simply either an Iraqi writer or a Finnish writer, both locations of identities, Iraq and Finland, are of importance when his place in the transnational cartography of literature is considered.

Reception in Finland

I will now analyse the reception of Blasim in Finnish media by “measuring” his degree of strangeness in critiques and articles. How much of a stranger is he considered to be? I will pay special attention to the way in which Blasim is *located* in the critiques and articles. These locations are defined in *narratives of belonging* used to describe either his background or present circumstances. There are at least two narratives, namely local and global, that appear to be conflicting. Although it looks as if he was drawn in opposite directions, I would like to think that there is a dynamic tension between the local and global versions of the story.

First, Blasim's exilic, transnational background is presented by telling about his personal journey from Iraq to Finland. Although he now lives in Finland, he continues to travel around the world, promoting his books, attending book fairs, etc. Moreover, his texts circulate in the global book market as translations and adaptations. In addition, Blasim's books are transnational because in many critiques the location of his oeuvre is discussed in terms of the aesthetic traditions of world literature. Secondly, in all articles about him and almost all critiques about his books, he is located in his present place of residence: Finland, Tampere, Pispala, Helsinki. This version of the narrative emphasizes the significance of his local ties.

Blasim was introduced to Finnish readers first and foremost as a refugee living in exile in Finland. The reason why he is written about is markedly and explicitly connected to his being a stranger in Finland. Obviously, this approach is justified because some of his short stories depict refugees and the Iraqi diaspora. The other reason for the interest of the media is the success of his books, particularly in the English-speaking world; foreign cultural capital is often considered very strong currency in Finland.

In 2010, when the first collection of his short stories was published in English but not yet in Finnish, the *Helsingin Sanomat* featured a lengthy article in which Blasim's story is told in detail but the focus is on the breakthrough of his work in the English and Arabic book markets, not in Finland. It is mentioned only briefly that a Finnish publisher is considering translating his first collection of short stories. In other words, in this early version of the narrative, his present life in Finland is like an excuse for the story, which is a *curiosity*. The article seems to be implying that readers should be excited about the fact that this foreign writer on the verge of international success presently lives in the country. In the article, Blasim's journey as a refugee is said to be filled with fantastic coincidences, while ending up in Finland is mentioned only briefly and with no dramatic twist: "He came to Finland in 2004. He doesn't have an Iraqi passport, because he is atheist." (Petäjä 2010.)

However, the writer, a well-known journalist working at the *Helsingin Sanomat*, introduces Blasim with a reassurance that "the Finnish reader should not be scared" of his texts, since his short stories are much easier to approach than Salman Rushdie's books, which "touch the changeable interface of the East and West". By contrast, Blasim writes "in a cool and laconic way without unnecessary intricacies or heavy cultural decorations". (Ibid.) It is suggested that the implied reader of the text will agree with the journalist that the Finnish audience is more comfortable with texts that do not possess "unnecessary intricacies". One may assume that the "heavy cultural decorations" that are labelled as unnecessary by the journalist refer to some kind of Orientalist writing tradition, as implied by Rushdie and Blasim's place of origin.

Blasim's literary style is presented to Finnish readers by references to both Eastern and Western literary cultures. An illustrative example of localising Blasim within specific literary traditions is provided by *Kiiltomato* (6.3.2013), an online literary magazine. The critique of Blasim's first collection in Finnish starts with

references to both modern European literature and the tradition of Arabic literature: “If Gogol or Kafka were to write the *Thousand and One Nights* set in contemporary Baghdad, the outcome would resemble Hassan Blasim’s collection of short stories *The Madman of Freedom Square (Majnun sahat al-hurriyya)*.” (Salomaa 2013.)

In addition to Gogol and Kafka, authors like Fuentes, Musil, García Márquez and Borges are named as kindred spirits to Blasim in the critiques of his books. His style is called magical realism, fantasy, metafiction and described as surreal, absurd, and minimalistic. It is said to be allegorical but also realistic. *Thousand and One Nights* is mentioned in several critiques. In this way, Blasim is localized in-between Eastern and Western traditions. (Poutiainen 2012; Saxell 2012; Nerg 2013; Tunkkari 2013; Salomaa 2014; Pietarinen 2014.) However, what is common to all intertextual references is that only a very few comparisons are made to Finnish literature.⁷

In perhaps the very first article on him in Finland, Blasim was introduced to readers by the heading “New Finnish Literature”. The writer of the article was the social anthropologist Marko Juntunen, who has conducted research on migration and can speak Arabic. The magazine it appeared in is published by Kehitysyhteistyön Palvelukeskus (Kepa), a platform for Finnish civil society organizations focusing on development cooperation. The headline of the article notes the concrete place where Blasim worked a café in Kallio, Helsinki. The caption of the article is stuffed with “nation speak” (Hannerz 1999):

“An Iraqi author is writing in Arabic in a bar in Helsinki for a British publisher.” (Juntunen 2009.)

The tendency to literally “locate him on the map” is rather generic in the stories about Blasim, as there are a striking number of references to exact places where he works and lives in almost every piece of writing about him: in Helsinki he writes in cafés in Kallio and Käpylä (Petäjä 2010; Janhunen 2014), two residential areas inhabited by freelance writers and nowadays also wealthy young couples, while in Tampere he worked first in an artists’ commune and then in his simple and cozy apartment in Pispala (Gustafsson 2012).

Some kind of version of the narrative of Blasim’s journey from Iraq to Finland is told in almost every article about him. In critiques, if his background is not discussed in the actual body of the text, the biographical context is given in the headline, caption or a separate fact box (e.g. Jelkänen 2014). In many cases, Finland is made to look like a safe haven for a refugee from Iraq who had been persecuted because

7 In one article about Blasim, the imagery of the language reminds the critic of Edith Södergran’s “visionarity” (Jelkänen 2014). [“Ajoittain kielen kuvallisuus muistuttaa Edith Södergranin (1892–1923) visionäärisyyttä, joskin myyttillinen kuvasto on Lähi-idästä: on granaattiomenapuita, skorpioneja ja lammaslauvoja.”] In addition, Blasim is compared to other Finnish writers in some literature blogs: in the blog “Luettua elämää”, the writer refers to Veijo Meri’s absurd portrayal of war in his novel *Manillaköysi* (1957) as something similar to Blasim’s oeuvre, and in the blog “Reader, why did I marry him”, the writer finds in P. I. Jääskeläinen’s *Lumikko ja yhdeksän muuta* (2006; English translation *The Rabbit Back Literature Society*, 2013) a kind of meta-level narrative typical of many of Blasim’s short stories.

of his previous career as a film director. In his present place of residence, however, there are other kinds of obstacles to do his artistic work and get it published: “In Finland, Blasim didn’t have to be afraid of the secret police, but his documentary work was complicated by the language barrier and the program policy of the Finnish Broadcasting Corporation.” (Gustafsson 2012.)

When his first book was published in Finnish, a critic of the *Helsingin Sanomat* (Pääkkönen 2012) located Blasim without further ado as part of the Finnish literary field, writing that “the topics of Blasim’s short stories are far from Finnish average prose and short stories”, but “[t]herefore it is great that the guild of Finnish authors has gotten an Iraqi-born author as an adjunct.”⁸ According to this critic, Finnish literature is simply enriched and strengthened by Blasim, and it seems that writers like Blasim do not cause any pressure to refine perceptions of Finnish literature and how it should be perceived.

As mentioned earlier, the place where Blasim lives in Finland plays an important role in his public image in the country. He has received recognition from the city of Tampere, first in the form of its literary award (2013) and then, after he was awarded the Independent Foreign Fiction Prize, at an official reception organized in his honour. A press release rather outspokenly promoted the merits of the city in supporting the writer: “The employment aid provided by Tampere city, together with the wage subsidy of the state, have granted him the circumstances to work as a writer in 2012–2013 at this crucial point in his career.”⁹

This highlighting of the importance of Tampere for Blasim’s work as a professional writer can be interpreted as a way to integrate and attach him to a specific place. He is not just a writer who happens to live in Tampere but a writer whom the city of Tampere has generously helped to achieve success. The significance of Tampere for Blasim – or perhaps the other way around, the significance of Blasim for Tampere – can be illustrated by the following headlines in different newspapers. For while the same critique of his book was featured in several newspapers, only in *Aamulehti*, published in Tampere, is the town mentioned in the headline:

“Hassan Blasim dislocates the soul” (*Pohjolan Sanomat* 12.1.2014)

“The Iraqi Hassan Blasim dislocates the soul” (*Satakunnan Kansa* 23.10.2014)

“Settled in Tampere, Hassan Blasim dislocates the soul” (*Aamulehti* 19.1.2014)¹⁰

Another article about Blasim in *Aamulehti* had a headline asking, “Does a future Nobel live in Pispala?”, thus locating him both in a local context as well as in the

8 “Blasimin novellit ovat aihepiiriltään kaukana suomalaisesta keskivertoproosasta ja novelleista. Siksi on hienoa, että suomalainen kirjailijakunta on saanut täydennykseksi irakilaisentyisen kirjailijan.”

9 <http://www.tampere.fi/tampereinfo/ajankohtaista/lkzICKeEW.html>. Translation mine.

10 “Hassan Blasim kääntää sielun sijoiltaan” (*Pohjolan Sanomat* 12.1.2014).

”Irakilainen Hassan Blasim kääntää sielun sijoiltaan” (*Satakunnan Kansa* 23.10.2014).

”Tampereelle asettunut Hassan Blasim kääntää sielun sijoiltaan” (*Aamulehti* 19.1.2014).

transnational field of world literature. Similar locating takes place in the body of the text, as the writer of the article compares Blasim to “Finnish writers”, whose texts are evaluated by considering their chances to win the Finlandia Literary Prize, whereas Blasim competes in a completely different league – in the running for a Nobel Literary Prize – thus being located above or outside the Finnish literary field. At the same time, in the wish that Blasim would win the Nobel Prize for Finland, the national dimension is strongly present.

Pispala has certainly become an important part of Blasim’s public image in Finland (e.g. Kuusela 2012; Aishi 2012). When he won the Independent Foreign Fiction Prize in May 2014, the *Helsingin Sanomat* had the headline “Independent Prize goes to Pispala” (Majander 2014).¹¹ The interpretation presented by the headline indeed follows a certain logic: if Blasim is considered to be “from Pispala”, the prize certainly goes “to Pispala”. In Tampere, the articulation lives on, even though Blasim moved to Helsinki some time ago. When he received the Finland Award on 8 December 2015, the headline in the online version of Tampere’s *Aamulehti* ran “The Finland Award for arts to Hassan Blasim from Pispala”,¹² while the printed version the next day stated that the award was given to Blasim, who had previously lived in Pispala.

Partly Included

The texts about Hassan Blasim in the Finnish media can be read as a narrative of integration. Over the last few years, he has shifted on a continuum from strangership towards a degree of familiarity. Especially after his international success, Finnish journalists and critics appear to be counting him as “one of us”; strangership is indeed relational as well as mutable.

As a scholar who belongs to an academic discipline called “Finnish literature”, for me Blasim’s presence in Finland and his visibility in the literary field raise interesting questions concerning definitions of the discipline itself. Should we define the object of our research so that writers like Blasim might be included? And if we do so, should we reconsider the hierarchy between the original work and the translation as primary and secondary and analyse the target texts as part of Finnish literature? There is no doubt that the Finnish translations made by Sampsa Peltonen are of high quality. On the other hand, the inclusion of Blasim in Finnish literature may well cause demand for Arabic-speaking scholars to enter into the discipline – after all, Arabic is Finland’s fifth-most spoken language. In any case, I find it extremely important to include “strangers” like Blasim in the conceptions about the literary field in Finland.

¹¹ Actually, the article incorrectly claims that Blasim had lived in Pispala for ten years.

¹² <http://www.aamulehti.fi/Kulttuuri/1195009570492/artikkeli/taiteen+suomi-palkinto+pispalalaiselle+hassan+blasimille.html>.

Cases like Blasim help us scholars to perceive the regional as well as linguistic dimensions of literary culture and the varying positions a writer can have in them. When the literary field is viewed as consisting of overlapping circles of different sizes – local, national and transnational – authors like Blasim indicate how the position in different circles may differ as well as shift. For example, while an author can be well known both locally and transnationally, it does not mean that he or she is necessarily celebrated on a national level. From the point of view of Finnish literary institutions such as the academic discipline of Finnish literature, “strangers” like Blasim may eventually provoke some sort of identity crisis. Recently, there has been discussion about the positions of majority and minority languages in Finland, as well as in Nordic countries in general (e.g. Korhonen 2017). However, from the point of view of an author, being part of the national literature may or may not be essential. For the career of Hassan Blasim, being classified as a Finnish author may not be of any significance, but for the future of cultural classifications such as “Finnish literature”, the inclusion of transnational and multilingual writers may prove to be a valuable, positive force.

In the research concerning literature written in minority languages and by authors who do not have as clear access to speak for themselves as writers using the majority language, due to the linguistic barriers prevailing in the literary field, there are various ethical issues to be considered. There is, for example, the question of othering: is there a danger for Blasim to be used as some sort of multicultural or multilingual token in the pursuit of diversifying the literary field in Finland? In addition, I regularly engage in self-accusations about the power hierarchies involved in the construction of the research I am conducting; the position of a researcher is inevitably a position of dominance. I was reminded of this hierarchy by a poem with the ironic title “A refugee in the paradise that is Europe”, which Blasim published on his Facebook wall.¹³ While the poem addresses the situation of a refugee arriving in Europe, it has a clear message for Europeans as well. I think it is only fair that the subject of my research has the last word:

Academics get new grant money to research your body and your soul.
 Politicians drink red wine after an emergency meeting to discuss your fate.
 They study history in search of an answer for your daughter, who's freezing in the forest cold.
 They weep crocodile tears over your pain.
 They come out in demonstrations against you and build walls.
 Green activists put up pictures of you in the street.
 Others sit on their sofas, comment wearily on your picture on Facebook, and go to sleep.
 They strip away your humanity in debates that are clever and sharp as knives.

¹³ The poem has been published in Swedish in Dagens Nyheter: <http://www.dn.se/dnbok/en-flykting-i-det-europeiska-paradis-et-av-hassan-blasim/>. The Finnish translation of the poem was performed on Finnish television by the singer Maija Vilkkumaa while the writer was seen in the background of the video: <http://areena.yle.fi/1-3395051>.

They write you down today and, with the eraser of selfishness, make you disappear the next morning.

They expect to come across their own humanity through your tragedy.

(Blasim 2015.)

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